

# IRISH POLITICAL REVIEW

ISSN 0790-7672

August 2004

Volume 19 No 8

**Turkey's Application:  
Europe, The Sick Man?**  
Nicholas Mansergh  
**New National Wage Agreement  
(Labour Comment)**

**The Northern Star** *Incorporating  
Workers' Weekly* Volume 18 Number 8  
ISSN 0954-5891

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## Northern Ireland

# Catching Up With History?

*Why Did Irish History Take So Long?* was the title of Garret FitzGerald's 'John Hume Lecture' at the McGill Summer School in Glenties, Co. Donegal in mid-July. Though meaningless, it was probably appropriate for a John Hume Lecture. We cannot say whether it was also appropriate for a McGill event. (We assume that McGill is Patrick McGill, the tramp-navvy man of letters who fought for the British Empire in the Great War.)

When History is completed, where does the human race go? What else is there in this world for it to live in? Human history is historical. If there is an eternal mode of existence, it exists elsewhere, and access to it is problematical.

Escape from history been the theme of John Hume's reflections over many years. What he did often made sense, but what he said rarely made sense. Because he was a man of action attempting to act purposefully in order to establish normality in a situation which was deliberately structured to be abnormal, it would be unkind to submit the famous "*Humespeak*" to thoughtful analysis.

But FitzGerald did not utter his nonsense while attempting to act within the impossible Northern situation. He is in any case not a man of action, but a 'Southern Ireland' intellectual, and the ideologue of the Free State side of the Treaty split. And, though an intellectual, he has always been unusually badly informed about the reality of life in the North. He has no commonsense instinct for it, and he has never attempted to come to terms with it intellectually.

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**Far-sighted Leader?**

# Two Anniversaries

The Warsaw Uprising of August 1944 has been extensively commemorated by the British media on its 60th anniversary, and it has even been suggested on the BBC that the Prime Minister should apologise to the Poles for not having supported them in their battle, as he did to the Irish for not feeding them during their Famine. And the whole thing is total humbug.

Britain acted consistently with its most sacred principles when it refused to feed the Irish. Those principles were set out more clearly by the Irish philosopher of English politics, Edmund Burke, than by anybody else—even Adam Smith. Burke, in his *Thoughts On Scarcity*, explained that any interference with the market in times of Famine would only make matters worse. If he had been alive in 1847 he might have not held to this principle because there was more to him than his theories. And, if he had been alive in 1798, he might have had to support the United Irishmen even though he hated them. Fortunately for himself he died in 1797 and was saved the agony of supporting French Republicans in Ireland or of reneging on his *Thoughts On Scarcity* at a time of severe famine. But the Government acted on his economic theory in 1847, and only reactionary Tories with a Jacobite tinge thought that people should have precedence over principle.

The Prime Minister's apology over the Famine a few years ago was a piece of opportunist hypocrisy. The Famine was

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When the Free State was formally declared a Republic by his own party in 1948, he declared himself to be still a Commonwealth Man. And some of his recent musings suggest that he feels that even the setting up of the Free State was a mistake. In that context one can make sense of his strange question: *Why did Irish history take so long?* It means: Why did the aberration of a separate Irish State take so long to be resumed back into the British fold?

Here is the gist of his address, as given in the *Irish Times* (July 19):

For 50 years, we had hugged our Southern grievance about the loss of 'our' fourth green field, while showing remarkably little practical concern for the faith of those of our fellow nationalists who dwelt in that abandoned field. Only the descent of the North into near-anarchy in the early 1970s forced us in the South... belatedly to face reality.

"In the North there were slow learners also. The unionist politicians and people sought to secure themselves against change by discrimination and repressive policies that would eventually undermine completely their own moral position as a local, artificially contrived majority.

"And, if I may say so, the nationalist minority were also slow learners. Badly led for almost 50 years, they failed to assert their rights, choosing all too often the sterile path of abstention from parliamentary politics.

"Finally, late in the day under a new and vibrant leadership, they finally

abandoned their futile hopes of practical aid from what had long become a self-absorbed and uninterested South, one that for decades past had become content to salve its conscience by occasional outbursts of puerile propaganda...

"Instead, these new nationalist leaders started to wield with growing success the weapon of peaceful protest to which, over many decades of liberalism and social democracy, British public opinion had become intensely vulnerable...

"Northern nationalists in the early 1970s included enough people... still gripped by memories and myths of a violent past, who were prepared to throw away the gains being made by their new constitutional leaders by futile armed action designed to secure by force what was already in the process of being achieved through a combination of skilful nationalist politics and futile unionist reaction...

"But what can one say of latter day Sinn Fein and their IRA? It took a quarter of a century and 3,500 unnecessary, brutal deaths for them to learn what was already self-evident in 1970—that in the modern world of democratic states and codes of human rights, peaceful protest and political action are far more potent weapons than the Armalite or Semtex.

"When in the aftermath of the 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement... the penny eventually dropped with them, the political path ahead had to be cleared for these slow learners by those democratic politicians whom Sinn Fein had long derided—John Hume, and successive governments of the 'Free State'."

Let's review some of these phases.

It made no practical difference whether Nationalist representatives sat in Stormont or abstained. For the most part they sat. The Stormont Parliament was not the source of government of a state. The major institutions of the state remained under Whitehall control, and some of the more substantial powers which Westminster sought to devolve to Stormont were reintegrated by Stormont back into the Whitehall system. This was the great success achieved by the Ulster Unionist Party in the 1920s and 1930s. It meant that the matters on which a form of class-based politics might have developed were not dealt with by Stormont. The Stormont Parliament simply copied Westminster legislation, whether Tory or Socialist.

The decision-making assembly for most matters affecting the state in Northern Ireland was Westminster. But Northern Ireland representation at Westminster was not allowed within the parties which wielded power at Westminster, and was therefore futile.

The power controlled by Stormont was the power of police. And the electoral function of Stormont was to show at every election that the "*local, artificially contrived majority*" for this strange of Union of Northern Ireland with Britain still held.

British "*liberalism and social democracy*" were not "*intensely vulnerable*" to protest by the Northern Ireland minority, but were intensely indifferent to it. Protest at Stormont was certain to be voted down, and protest at Westminster was not allowed, the "*convention*" being that Stormont was the appropriate place for it.

British opinion was sublimely indifferent to protest about Northern Ireland in the mid-1960s (as we know from personal experience). It was only when protest led to trouble on the streets in the Winter of 1968-9 that it began to take heed. But, if it noticed, it did nothing until conflict on the streets led to gunfire and arson in Belfast in August 1969. And it was not "*Sinn Fein and their IRA*" that started the shooting, but the forces of law and order. And all that Whitehall did then was to put its own Army on the streets to curb Unionist action, leaving intact the political arrangements which had generated the trouble.

The "*new and vibrant leadership*", of

the minority, the SDLP, based itself on a self-contradictory platform—or two mutually exclusive platforms—reform as part of the UK (“*British Rights for British Citizens*”), and the removal of the 6 Counties from the UK to the Irish Republic. When in the Summer of 1971 the new Unionist Prime Minister, Brian Faulkner, proposed a political reform, the SDLP responded enthusiastically on the spur of the moment on the basis of its reform programme, but on further consideration decided on the basis of its anti-Partition programme to boycott Stormont. And that was when the Republican war effort really cut loose—leading to the abolition of Stormont by Whitehall early in 1972.

In the Autumn of 1973 the incomparable remnant of aristocracy, William Whitelaw, seduced the SDLP back to the negotiating table. The Sunningdale Agreement was negotiated between the Unionists, the SDLP and the Dublin Government in which Dr. FitzGerald was Foreign Minister and C.C. O’Brien spokesman on the North. A power-sharing arrangement began to operate in January 1974. It fell five months later when the duplicity of the Dublin Government in the negotiations came to light. It might have been saved if the Council of Ireland had been deferred, or if a referendum had been called to amend the sovereignty claim asserted in Articles 2 & 3 of the Constitution. Dr. FitzGerald and his colleagues would agree to do neither. They called upon Whitehall to crush the “*Constitutional stoppage*” of the Unionist community against Sunningdale by force. The entire Protestant community went on strike against the duplicity which had been practised on it, and those of us who lived in the midst of the strike were in no doubt that there was a determination to see it through, regardless of consequences. But Dr. FitzGerald and his colleagues seemed to be still convinced of the old Nationalist maxim that the Unionist will would collapse in the face of a strong British show of force.

Eleven years later FitzGerald (now Taoiseach) negotiated the Anglo-Irish Agreement with Mrs. Thatcher, which led to a qualitative increase in the segregation of the Protestant and Catholic communities. As we tried to shift Protestant outrage into a demand for incorporation into the political system of the state, John Hume expressed outrage at our activities. He described the purpose of the Agreement as being “*to lance the Unionist boil*”.

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## The Greatest “Irish” Rugby Player And the Major

Who was the greatest Irish rugby player of all time? Most people over 40 would say Mike Gibson. Fergus Slattery, the great flanker and team mate of Gibson’s, also opted for the Belfast man when asked that question a few years ago in an RTE radio interview. Indeed it could be said that he was not just the greatest Irish rugby player but was one of the greatest rugby players from any country of all time. The All Blacks thought he was the best player on the famous Lions team of the early seventies and that team included such legends as Gareth Edwards, Phil Bennett and J.P.R. Williams.

Despite his achievements he was modest and unassuming. Once as he was flying past J.P.R. Williams in a match in Lansdowne road the Welshman extended a clenched fist and upended him to prevent a certain try. When asked after the match to comment on the incident, which could have caused a serious injury, there was no whingeing or recriminations from Gibson. “These things happen in the heat of battle” seemed to be his attitude. In short he was a model sportsman whom the nation could be proud of.

As it happens in 1974 when he was entering the peak of his sporting prowess he was also a shareholder in *The Irish Times Holdings*, the company that owned *The Irish Times Ltd*. In those far-off days of amateurism in sport, even legends had to make their own way in the world. The Shareholders Register of *The Irish Times Holdings* lists him as a solicitor along with his full name in all its glory: Cameron Michael Henderson Gibson. The register also indicates his nationality which, of course, is... But surely there must be some mistake. The greatest Irish rugby player is listed as being British!

How ungrateful! And after all he did for us! And how we booed that Welshman all those years ago in Lansdowne road! But yet there it is, in clear handwriting in the box marked “*Nationality*” is the word “*British*”.

Of course it shouldn’t have come as a surprise. Rugby in the North is largely a Protestant game and Protestants in that part of Ireland tend to consider themselves British.

This question of nationality can be a tricky subject as readers of this magazine will know. The Duke of Wellington declared himself to be British. When it was pointed out to him that he was born in Ireland he famously replied that being born in a stable didn’t make one a horse. Gibson might similarly say that playing in Lansdowne road in a green jersey doesn’t make one an Irishman. And who could possibly question the honesty of either man?

But, what of that other shareholder in “*The Irish Times Holdings*” at that time! Like Wellington, Thomas Bleakley McDowell was also a British soldier, although he doesn’t appear to have seen much action. He joined the army in 1942 and left in 1955. Like Gibson he studied law. He graduated in 1950 from Queens while in the army and was called to the bar a year later. About the only other thing he had in common with Gibson was that he came from a Belfast Protestant background.

When he entered civilian life he cultivated the persona of an English gentleman despite his modest Belfast background. He must have cut a bizarre figure in the late 1950s complete with monocle, trimmed moustache, silver pocket watch and waistcoat—he was only in his mid thirties at that time—but this did not appear to have been a handicap in the Anglo Irish business milieu of that time.

Although he had left the British army in 1955 he didn’t sever his links. For many years McDowell was in the “*Judge Advocates Department*”, which is involved in the running of court-martials.

In his published diary, Cecil King, the former *Daily Mirror* proprietor, said, quite matter of factly, that McDowell was in MI5 (see *The Irish Times Watergate Moment* by

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The SDLP was still caught in the self-contradiction on which it was based.

The development which began a few years later was not a matter of Gerry Adams coming around to the viewpoint of John Hume and Garret FitzGerald. Adams had publicly outlined the scheme of development which became known as “*the peace process*” before there were any Hume/Adams meetings. And Hume had to retreat from the strategy of “*lancing the Unionist boil*” in order to become a pathfinder in the peace process.

Dr. FitzGerald continued:

“In fairness, one must add that once the IRA leaders had belatedly adopted the previously despised path of peace, they demonstrated political skills that matched, and indeed at times seem to surpass, those of their long established democratic rivals. But the slow history syndrome is till today hard at work within Sinn Fein/IRA itself. Ten years on from 1993 feet are still being dragged.”

And we expect that ten years on there will still be foot dragging. What “*the path of peace*” means within the Northern Ireland constitutional structure is communal attrition. Nothing else is possible but the conflict of the two communities, who are constitutionally structured into solid blocs.

This elementary fact was never grasped by Dr. FitzGerald. When he had the power to intervene, his interventions always aggravated communal tension, even though he seemed to be genuinely convinced that he was doing the opposite.

The possibility of a development out of this grinding of the two communities against each other now lies entirely with Sinn Fein, which has become more than a Northern Ireland party. And, within the arena of communal conflict, the main social development there has been is connected with the displacement of the SDLP (which never succeeded in being more than the old Nationalism with a new name) by Sinn Fein. The Catholic community in the North is now something utterly different from what it was before it fought a war.

(Is that a ‘justification’? Perish the thought! It is an observation of a fact which only a Dr. FitzGerald could fail to see.)

## Two Anniversaries continued

the outcome of a century and a half of recklessly destructive British government in Ireland. It was one of many famines brought about by the way that Britain used its enormous power in the world after the Battle of the Boyne. If the British State had given priority to people over commercial principle, it would never have become a world Empire with the destiny of the world in its hands. And, since the present Prime Minister has continued Margaret Thatcher’s work of rehabilitating the reputation of the Empire (which in the 1970s had fallen into disrepute), with a view to restoring British world power, his apology was only a piece of hypocrisy which served a political purpose of the moment with regard to Ireland.

If Britain owes an apology to the Poles, it is not over the Rising in 1944 (unless it instigated the Rising—which is a matter to be looked into), but over its inaction in September 1939. But September 1939 is still too close to the bone even to be mentioned.

Poland was an ally of Nazi Germany from 1934 until March 1939. In October 1938 it cooperated with Hitler in pulling Czechoslovakia apart. Hitler had brought an end to the nationalist agitation of the German democratic parties against the 1919 Polish border settlement made at

Versailles, reserving only the Danzig issue. In early 1939 Danzig, a German city in the Polish Corridor, was the only unresolved problem remaining from the Versailles treaty of 1919. Hitler proposed that it should be incorporated into East Prussia.

Germany was partitioned in 1919 in the sense of being divided into two parts. East Prussia was, constitutionally, an integral part of the German state, but was separated from the rest of the state by a stretch of territory connecting Poland with the sea, known as the Polish Corridor. Danzig was a major German city and port at the eastern end of the Corridor, adjacent to East Prussia. It was not constitutionally part of the Polish State, but was designated—anachronistically—as a Free City under League of Nations sovereignty. The pious hope was that Polish trade would go through Danzig, promoting good relations between Germans and Poles, and perhaps eroding the German character of the city. What actually happened was that Poland built its own port on the Baltic, Gdynia, and boycotted Danzig.

The development of good relations between nationalities was never a likely outcome of the Versailles settlement of Eastern Europe, which fostered extreme nationalism.

There was an Irish input into the Danzig issue in the late 1930s. Sean Lester, an Ulster Protestant Sinn Feiner of the War of Independence era who joined the anti-Treaty side and was forwarded to the staff

## The Greatest “Irish” Rugby Player And the Major continued

Jack Lane, *Irish Political Review*, May 2004). The British Prime Minister Harold Wilson was also under the impression that McDowell was in the intelligence business (see letter of 16.9.69 from Peter Gregson, Wilson’s private secretary).

The “white nigger” letter indicates that he came running to Downing Street rather than Taoiseach’s Office when Northern Ireland exploded in 1969 and Jack Lynch was making his “*we can no longer stand (idly) by*” speeches. And we learn from the *Sunday Times* that, when setting up the so called “*Trust*” in 1974, he used the services of “*Lord Alan Goodman, the legendary lawyer and fixit who advised Harold Wilson, the Labour Leader, during the Profumo affair*” (*Sunday Times* 18.11.01).

Although the former editor of *The Irish Times*, Conor Brady, has denied that there was editorial interference in the conduct of the paper from McDowell, the *Sunday Times* profile of the Major says that the two men’s relationship was “*uneasy*”. It goes on to say that *The Irish Times* was “*born a unionist title and The Major has always tried to preserve its British essence*”.

So, what nationality did Major McDowell declare in the company returns? In the box for “*Nationality*” opposite his name is the word “*Irish*”! Perhaps he is as honest and straightforward in his national allegiance as the Duke of Wellington and Mike Gibson, but somehow I have my doubts.

John Martin

of the League of Nations, was High Commissioner for Danzig from 1934 to 1937. He stuck rigorously to his formal brief in the handling of the Danzigers and was therefore an aggravating influence on a real situation which had become unviable. The League of Nations was brushed aside by Britain in September 1939 when it declared war on Germany, but was resuscitated by Britain a few months later for the purpose of authorising British conflict with Russia in Finland.

In June 1940 the Secretary General of the League, Avenol, resigned and declared support of the New Order in Europe which resulted from German victory over the Powers which had declared war on it. His action was consistent with the basis on which the League itself had been founded—the Versailles system had been founded on the broken Armistice of the military victors of 1918. Lester then became Secretary-General of the phantom League, which was allowed to play no part in the events of the following years, being formally wound up in 1946, when the Agencies created by Lester's predecessor were taken over by the United Nations.

(The Story of the League was told in the *Irish Political Review* in November 1995 and September 1996. Since then an uncritical television biography of Lester by John Bowman has been broadcast by RTE, and a biography of him has been published by his son-in-law, the late Douglas Gageby of the *Irish Times*.)

We read in the *Daily Mail* (July 31):

“Hitler's invasion of Poland in 1939 was what drew Britain into World War II”.

That is the proper way to say it—the way that fits in with The British Story.

In fact, there was no World War in September 1939. There was only a German/Polish War. The World War was brought about subsequently by Britain using Poland as the excuse. But the German/Polish War had been instigated by Britain for the purpose of having another World War.

Britain gave the Czech Sudetenland to Germany in October 1938, browbeating France and the Czechoslovak Government into complicity. The Sudetenland was not part of the German State in 1914 and popular German feeling was not moved by it as it was by Danzig. And the award of the Sudetenland to Germany strengthened it enormously, which would

not have been the case with Danzig.

The Sudeten region was described as “*a dagger pointing at the heart of Germany*”, and anybody travelling from Munich to Dresden should be able to see why. It is bordered by a ring of mountains which made Czechoslovakia eminently defensible, and from which an invasion might be launched into the German plain towards Berlin. The region also included a strong arms industry which was more advanced than the German. Its transfer to Germany strengthened the German state and altered the power balance in Eastern Europe in a way that the restoration of Danzig to Germany would not have done.

If the object of British policy had been to clear away the last remnant of the Versailles Treaty as a preliminary to containing the German state, whose erosion of Versailles it had facilitated since the coming to power of Hitler, it would itself have taken the initiative to end the anomalous position of Danzig, and reinforced the French guarantee to Czechoslovakia instead of subverting it. It did the opposite. And to account for what it did as a mistake seems somehow inadequate. It is not credible as a mistake.

Having established German predominance in Central Europe in 1938, Britain prepared to make war on it in March 1939. Germany, having cooperated with Poland to dismantle Czechoslovakia in the Autumn of 1938, said that the time had come to settle the matter of Danzig. Britain at that juncture gave Poland a guarantee of military support if it refused to negotiate a transfer of Danzig to East Prussia, and brought France along with it. This effectively broke the German-Polish alliance and led to the German/Polish war over Danzig. The Poles refused to negotiate the transfer of Danzig in the conviction that in a war with Germany they would have the two strongest military powers as active allies. In the event, they found that they had been led up the garden path. In September 1939 they fought Germany alone. And the Partition of Germany meant that the Poles were caught in a pincers right from the start, German armies attacking from both east (East Prussia) and west.

The British excuse for inaction (made after the event) was that Poland could only be defended against Germany by means of an alliance with Russia, that Britain had tried to bring Russia into an alliance, but that Russia (in August 1939) had treacherously made an alliance with Germany instead.

Britain had during the Summer of 1939 made some gestures towards seeking an alliance with Russia over Danzig, but they were too ineffective to have been seriously intended. A reasonable reading of the situation from the Russian viewpoint was that Britain was directing Germany eastwards. Hitler, confronted by the powerful Triple Alliance of Britain, France and Poland made overtures to Russia for a Non-aggression Pact, and Anglo-French conduct gave Russia an incentive for agreeing.

The inclusion of Russia in an alliance to prevent the incorporation of Danzig into the German state was in any case made impossible by the absolute Polish refusal to entertain Russia as an ally.

Poland had defeated the Soviet Union in the Polish/Soviet War of 1920 (led by James Connolly's only Continental counterpart, Joseph Pilsudski) and had included a large tract of Russian territory in the Polish State. The German-Soviet Pact of August 1939 included a secret provision that, in the event of the collapse of the Polish state, this territory should revert to Russia. When the Polish military effort collapsed in late September 1939, the Russian armies moved in and met the Germans at the agreed line of division. This event has been generally represented in Western propaganda as a joint German-Soviet invasion of Poland, but it was in fact nothing more than the re-occupation by Russia, after the collapse of the Polish state, of territory conquered by the Poles in 1920. If Britain and France had made good their ‘guarantee’ to Poland in September 1939, or if the Poles had been able to fight their own war, the secret clauses of the German-Soviet Pact would not have become operative.

If apologies are the order of the day, then Britain owes an apology to Poland for encouraging it into conflict with Germany over Danzig with a military guarantee which it failed to honour, and had made no practical preparations to honour.

The Warsaw Rising came four years later.

Britain, having left Poland in the lurch, then brought about a World War. In the course of that War the German armies invaded Russia, were held by the Red Army, and then were driven westwards. By the Summer of 1944 the front-line was back on the Vistula, and the Red Army was back on the site, facing Warsaw, where it had been routed by Pilsudski in

1920. At that moment the Polish Home Army (the resistance movement of the Polish Government-in-exile in London) made its bid to take control of Warsaw.

The Polish Resistance, although operating in the most difficult conditions, was the strongest and most durable Resistance movement of the Second World War. It began at the beginning and continued through to the end.

But what was the end?

The Warsaw Rising of August 1944 was led by General Bor-Komarowski, whose name is barely mentioned in many reference works, and is not mentioned at all in some.

A Red Army commanded by Marshal Rokossowski (a future Defence Minister of Poland) was in the region of Warsaw in late July 1944 when it halted its advance. It did not resume its advance when the Home Army Rising erupted in Warsaw. It did not interfere in the Battle of Warsaw, between the Polish Home Army and the German Army, which lasted for two months. Hitler took the Polish *volte face* of 1939 badly. The Poles were allies to whom he had made a reasonable proposal for a final settlement of borders, and who had responded by joining a military alliance against him on the basis of false promises. When the 1944 Rising was suppressed, he ordered the city of Warsaw to be destroyed, after which the German Army retreated. The Red Army then took possession of the ruins without firing a shot.

It became customary later—much later—to represent the Soviet failure to intervene in the Warsaw Rising as a betrayal. But the Great Betrayal of the 2nd World War was the Anglo-French betrayal of September 1939—and the Great Lie of the War was the liberation of Poland in 1944: the purpose for which Britain purportedly had gone to war.

The purpose of the Warsaw Rising was to pre-empt the impending liberation of Poland—the event which Churchill brazenly presented as liberation—the Soviet occupation of Poland.

The World War was not of Russia's making. It was made in Britain. When the Anglo-French declaration of war on Germany led to catastrophic defeat in France in May 1940, and when it was understood (through breaking the German codes) that Hitler did not intend to invade

Britain, Churchill refused to follow France into making a settlement. He kept Europe on a war-footing, engaging in marginal military activity with the object of spreading the war. The great prize was a German/Soviet war. When that happened, the possibility of Germany being defeated arose. But the defeat could only be inflicted by the Red Army. And the Red Army, which owed nothing to Poland or to Britain, declined to help to restore to power in Warsaw an agency of the pre-War Government whose chief purpose was to oppose it.

The Soviet Union, as everybody knew, was based on a concept of civilisation which was incompatible with the Western capitalist conception, and it extended its system along with its power. The Warsaw Rising might be understood as an attempt to start the 3rd World War before the 2nd had ended. The leaders of the Rising expected to gain control of Warsaw in a few days. With the Red Army across the river, the German Army might have been expected to withdraw and leave Bor Komarowski in a position of some power confronting Rokossowski. But Hitler had gone subjectivist about the Poles over their conduct in 1939 and, with the war lost, he indulged himself. And when that happened it would hardly have made sense for Stalin to come to the support of a premature enemy of the next war, especially since the astonishing Russian advance of the Summer of 1944 had run out of momentum, and saving the enemy would have involved some risk.

A British apology for failing to assist the Rising would be humbug. In August 1944 it had barely returned to the main theatre of war and was not in a position to intervene. Russia allowed it to do what it could without helping or hindering it. And Britain was careful not to make an issue of the fact that its powerful Ally, on whom it still depended, sat across the Vistula while the enemy who was retreating before it crushed the new enemy that was attempting to rise up before it.

There was a time when one might have been sentimental about such things, but there is little place for sentimentality in our New World Over. And Poland, which has always been magnificent under oppression, has always been less so in freedom—and the first use it has made of its freedom this time is to participate actively in the destruction of the state in Iraq.

The eastern border of Poland today is more or less the border agreed between

Hitler and Stalin in 1939. And while Chancellor Schröder, a Social Democrat, went to Warsaw to confess collective German guilt for the suppression of the Rising, other Germans are taking legal action against the Polish state over loss of property in the great ethnic cleansing of 1945 when the Polish state was shifted westwards. More of this kind of thing is to be expected as the coherent European project launched by the genuinely international Christian Democracy half a century ago is dispersed through limitless expansion of the EU.

\*

The second anniversary is the tercentenary of the Battle of Blenheim. It is marked with a book by Princess Diana's brother and, judging by radio interviews with him, it seems to be a very good book indeed—a book in which the British interest in Europe is frankly stated.

There is a poem called *The Battle Of Blenheim* by Robert Southey which was once part of the radical literature of England and which was kept alive in parts of Ireland after falling into disuse in Britain. An old man and his two grandchildren are working in the fields in southern Germany. The grandson, "little Peterkin" comes across a skull. The grandfather explains that a great battle was fought on those fields. The children want to know what it was about. The grandfather can't quite bring to mind what it was about, but he knows, because of the great slaughter, that it was about something very important. We can only bring to mind the last few lines:

"'But what good came of it at last?'  
Quoth little Peterkin.  
'Why, that I cannot tell', said he,  
'But 'twas a famous victory'."

Blenheim was a crucial battle in the first British balance-of-power war in Europe. The balance-of-power strategy was set in motion by William of Orange after his victory at the Boyne. Its purpose was to prevent a European settlement from being arrived at through the operation of European forces. Europe was to be kept at conflict with itself so that Britain would be free to extend its power through the rest of the world.

Blenheim prevented Europe from settling down under French hegemony, and established the unsettling hegemony of Britain in Europe.

At Blenheim, a French-Bavarian force was defeated by a British-Austrian force commanded by John Churchill, who

became Duke of Marlborough. Old Kaspar had reason for not being able to recall what good came of it, because the good that came of it was the British Empire.

Robert Southey was a supporter of the French Revolution in his younger days. He went on to mature into a pillar of the

British Empire, becoming Poet Laureate. And that is how the British state has evolved ever since. Disraeli told it as it was: young men need to have high principles in order to have something to sell out. And ditto for women in these more enlightened times.

**Brendan Clifford**

democratically. That again puts Ireland in the shade as regards elites and ‘popular sentiment’. The Turkish Government showed moral courage. It can be taken as representative of Turkish sentiment: Professor Laffan really cannot pick and choose what is legitimate in the representation of other countries and casually dismiss a government’s democratic credentials. But that bad habit pervades Irish society—and we know who passed it on.

*Turkey’s Application To Join EU*

## Europe, The Sick Man?

The next big issue for Europe is the decision to open negotiations for Turkey’s admission. Already the two Europes are lining up and it remains to be seen what the outcome will be. British Europe is all for it and French Europe is opposed. There will be a lot of talk about Turkey in the coming months but everyone knows that all the discussion is really about the EU and what it is. There is no great lack of knowledge about what Turkey is and the Turks know what they are and what they want. They are prepared to have a good relationship with whoever suits their interests, despite having little in common with them in other ways—e.g., Israel and the US. But there is quite a lack of knowledge about what exactly the EU now is and what is in its own best interest. It is the reverse of the old propaganda slogan of World War I about *the sick man of Europe*. Not that there was ever any truth in the original slogan, as Ataturk showed by never being defeated in battle—earning him the sobriquet hereabouts, “*Attaboy, Ataturk*”.

The possible admission of Turkey brings right into focus what exactly the EU now is. Europhiles may read all sorts of things into the heads of the founding fathers, but nobody could suggest that the admission of Turkey was one of the visions in the mind of those who signed the Treaty of Rome in 1956. How has it become a concept that many now support? Britain leads the case for it and Ireland of course trots along, as indeed it trotted along to help put the alleged ‘*sick man of Europe*’ out of his misery 90 years ago. But those “*lonely graves by Sulva’s waves*” are testimony to the health of the patient. The diagnosis this time could be just as illusory. However, if Turkey joined we would be morally bound to assist ‘the patient’ again if he got into difficulties.

The European project has become a victim of economic determinism as promoted by Britain since the early 80s. The British vision of a commercial, trading

entity has largely ousted the Christian Social Democratic vision of the European Founding Fathers. There is no real case against Turkey joining, though the rest of Eastern Europe to the Urals would have as good a case. Obviously admission is no problem for Turkey. It is being offered an economic opportunity and it will take it.

The Europhiles try to convince themselves that Turkey is really joining something else and for some other reason and as a result these Europhiles talk rubbish. Professor Laffan is a doyenne of the Panglossian school on Europe but even she has a twinge about Turkey joining and naturally focuses on the state of Turkey rather than the state of Europe. She is reported in the *Irish Times*:

“But despite the great changes introduced and the arguments not to close the door on the world’s only Muslim democratic state, Prof Brigid Laffan, of the Dublin European Institute, has some reservations. “What you have in Turkey is a westernised elite that see EU membership as the end of Ataturk’s [founder of the modern Turkish state] vision but that is not underpinned by popular sentiment” (12.7.04).

This is nonsense. The current Turkish is the most democratic and representative government that Turkey has ever had. It is likely to be in tune with ‘popular sentiment’ and it is sheer arrogance for Ms Laffan to suggest otherwise. Indeed, the Turkish Government has never refused to recognise the results of a referendum on Europe which indicated quite a large ‘popular sentiment’ against the current EU—as happened here in Ireland. Professor Laffan should be more concerned with elites closer to home and how they are managing sentiment on the EU. The current Turkish government has replaced the Ataturk consensus, or conspiracy, which was based on the Army, and represents a sea change in the internal life of Turkey. This Government has passed a real test over the invasion of Iraq and acted honourably and

The *Irish Times* report continues:

“While a majority of Turks want to join the EU, Prof Laffan says she is concerned about the difference in values held in Turkey and the rest of Europe.” (12.7.04)

Ms Laffan knows very well that a Europe incorporating Turkey cannot be a *European* entity in any real cultural and political sense. It can of course be a trading bloc and that is what Turkey will join. Values don’t matter in trading. Even honesty is only a value if it pays dividends; otherwise it’s a vice. The values of trading are the same as they were in the real—or proverbial—human jungle and will be the same if man populates and rules the known universe. The actual values that differentiate people and define human progress are a very different kettle of fish—but these concepts are for the birds in the brave new EU. Ms Laffan should not worry her head about the different values in the new Europe—there will be none. Profit and loss is the same everywhere.

The ironic position now is that the positions of Ms Laffan and Anthony Coughlan will soon meet up because, as the EU expands as a trading area, the more it will disappear as a political entity. Soon Coughlan will see the sense of acting as a rabid ‘pro European’, so that the Free Trade Area can extend as far as possible and Europe as a distinctive voice will disappear completely. I assume Coughlan will be opposing Turkey’s entry—old habits die hard. If he does it means he has yet to realise that his British mentors have done his work for him. His colleague, the late Raymond Crotty, asked the British to take over thinking for Ireland in an impassioned article in *The Times* of 3rd July 1972. Coughlan has followed suit in practice but the British did more than his thinking for him—they implemented his dearest wish to destroy Europe. But they did it without Coughlan seeming to fully appreciate what they were doing. He should cop on and become the very model of a modern European, team up with Ms. Laffan and between them they could help finish off the European project once and for all.

**Jack Lane**

## Διγνεας Oisín agus Pádraig

Oisín:

Δε σιν, Δ Πάδραϊς νια όν Ρόμην  
μαρ έάρλα υόιθ, υάρ μηάιθ;  
μο υόιλίξ ζαν μέ 's αν ήιανη  
μαρ ήιωμαρ, 's υο Όια νάρ σάμ.

Πάδραϊς:

Is é Όια ατά ζο σάμ  
μολαδ ζο βράδ leis, Δ ήιρ λέιέ,  
ι ήφλαιέας δε καιέαμ να ζλόιρε  
is αν ήιανη ήά ήρόν ι ήπέιν.

O.:

Όο έλεαέταιυίς ζαέ ανη λό  
ήειέ ι ηζλεο 's ι ζααέαιθ cruα;  
's ζιβε ιη ιφρεανη νό ι ήφλαιέας υόιθ  
βαιηφιο cóιρ αμαέ ζαν ήυαις.

P.:

Ό's ιη ιφρεανη ατά αν ήιανη,  
Δ Oisín ζαν έιαλλ ιο ζλόρ,  
ní ήφαιζιυο ανη cumαs αρ smaέε -  
Όια να ήφεαρé ní ήειδ leo.

O.:

Όά mβαδύ μο ημας Oscar is Όια  
λάμ αρ λάμ αρ αν ζcηoc σο έιαρ,  
υά ήφειαιη Oscar αρ λάρ  
έρειυφιηη ζο mb'ήεαρ λάιυιρ Όια.

P.:

Ζαέ Δ υειocφαιδ 's Δ υεάιηις  
's Δ mβειέ αρ αρυ αν έποιc σο έιαρ,  
υά mβα coil le Όια Δ υειαιη  
ήειυίς uile αρ λάρ ζαν ήλια.

O.:

Όά mβειυίς ήιανη-ήάιλ ανη  
's Δ υειαιέ λάιυιρ ήιονη να sló -  
Δ ήφuil ιη ιφρεανη 's ι ήφλαιέας υ'άιρεαμ  
ceανη αρ ήράιυο ní ήεαδ σα ζλεο.

P.:

Νί ραιθ is ηιλ 'na ζcómáέταιθ  
Oisín, ζαν ήό υυιc, υυαιδ αρ Όια,  
is ζυρ cρí η-α ήρειέ αμáιη  
ατάιυο υά ζcρά ι υεις να ήριαν.

O.:

Cρí η-α ήρειέ να ηεαρé Δ λάμ  
ní έιocφαδύ leis bás να ήήιανη,

## The contest of Oisín and Patrick (1)

Oisín:

Thus, O Patrick, new from Rome,  
what befell them, our women;  
alas, that I and the Fianna  
are not how we were, and that your God were not content.

Patrick:

It is God who is content  
praise be to him forever, O grey person;  
in paradise, enjoying glory,  
and the Fianna in distress and pain.

O.:

If they practise every day  
fighting and hard battles;  
whether they are in heaven or hell  
they will achieve right without fail.

P.:

Since the Fianna are in hell  
O Oisín of the senseless words,  
they will have no command of power  
the God of Virtue will not be with them.

O.:

If my son Oscar and God  
were in hand-to-hand combat on that hill over there  
and if I saw Oscar beaten  
I would believe that God is strong.

P.:

Everyone who ever was or will be  
if all of them were on that hill over there  
if it were God's will to lay them low  
they would all be dead in an instant.

O.:

If the Fianna of F·il (Ireland) were there  
and their valiant leader Fionn of the hosts  
if all the forces of heaven and hell were against them  
not one of them would keep his head attached to his neck.

P.:

There was not nor is in their power  
O Oisín, truly, to defeat God,  
and it by his judgement alone  
that they are in torment in the house of pain (hell).

O.:

By his judgement or the strength of his arm  
he could not bring about the death of the Fianna,

ná fós dá mbeadó 'n-a cóimóidil  
cusa 's do luét crónáin, an éliar.

P.:  
Níl i nÓia ac fformáic uile  
grása 'na deuille gan crá;  
's é an máic é ó ocis zac máic  
ní hionann is feara fáil.

O.:  
Ní fáca-sa don máic ó Óia,  
i seal na bFianna, a pádrais nua  
ná fós ó sin ac beasán bío  
mar veir cú linn 's ní fiú a lua.

Ní mar sin as an bFéinn  
do éinn a léirmáic zac lá;  
's iad is doilig liom uaim i bpad  
's ní cusa ná an fear sin go bróc.

P.:  
Ní tuiscar tuic, a fír éirín,  
sur do máiceas úireac Óé  
cusa o'pásáil beo mar sin  
io éranh érioc dá éain zac lao?

not even if he had, to help him,  
you and your chanters, the clergy.

P.:  
In God is only the well-being of all,  
grace in an boundless flood;  
he is the Good from whom comes all good  
unlike the men of Ireland.

O.:  
I saw no good coming from God,  
in the time of the Fianna, O new-fangled Patrick,  
nor since then except for a little food,  
as you say to us hardly worth mentioning.

It was not so with the Fianna  
every day I would see their clear worth;  
their departure is a great sadness to me,  
and not you or that Man ever.

P.:  
You do not understand, old-timer,  
that is only the benevolence of God  
that keeps you thus alive,  
a trembling tree, complaining every day.

Oisín was the son of Fionn Mac Cumhaill. He fell in love with a woman of the immortal Tuatha De Danann, and went with her to Tír na n'g. As time passed he grew homesick to see his comrades in the Fianna and was allowed to return to Ireland on horseback on condition that he not set foot on the ground. When he arrived he saw a group of people trying to shift a rock. Surprised at how feeble they were compared with the heroes he expected, he leaned over to lift the rock. His saddle-girth broke and when he fell to the ground he aged three hundred years. The Fianna were all dead, and Christianity had taken hold. [More next month.]

## THE CLONBANIN COLUMN

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“And so, having made their decision to fight without the valuable aid of the mines, the leaders and the men of the different Sections awaited the foe... . A seemingly interminable wait it must have been even allowing for the fact that at intervals the men were relieved systematically to obtain food at neighbouring farm houses. What were the thoughts of those men of the hillsides who waited patiently at their posts? Along what channels did their minds work as they lay there in the cold, damp ditches of Clonbanin while noon-day came and passed and the early afternoon set in? (Rebel Cork's Fighting Story by Pat Lynch, Anvil Press, Tralee)

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“The land of a man's birth is his true country... Right by birth is the strongest right any man can have to be regarded as the citizen of any state ... Why do some women, when in an advanced state of pregnancy, change the

place of their abode if not for the reason that the infant who is to be born should be a native of that place in which it first draws the breath of life?” (John Lynch, priest and historian, ?1599-?1673, born and educated in France, returned to Galway on his ordination in 1622 and was made Archdeacon of Tuam.)

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“All eyes are on the next Dail. And most are on Labour. What will Labour do?”

“The answer is clear. Policy in the Labour Party is determined by its Annual Conference. The last two Conferences have declared against coalition. And there Labour stands.

“In Dail Eireann, after the next election, Labour will propose its own nominee for Taoiseach. It will not support the nomination of either the other two parties.

“Should a majority of conservative deputies be returned to the Dail, then the responsibility is on the two civil war parties to give the nation a government.

“The responsibility is on those who believe in the same conservative attitudes to bury their personal differences and stop play-acting. The difference between the two Civil War Parties is in name only. The past is past and best forgotten.” (The New Republic, The Official

Programme of the Labour Party-June, 1969).

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CLONBANIN had not contemplated writing an Obituary for Ronald Reagan but then we saw a letter from Joe Foyle of Dublin, an eminent scholar in his own right, these are Joe's thoughts on the former film actor and President of the United States:

“Ronan Mullen does his best to prove that Ronald Reagan's inability to master details related to policy issues was more than offset by his related vision.

“The truth is, as his various biographies show, Reagan was chosen by calculating power-hungry businessmen because he was an actor with a photographic memory who could be trusted to issue carefully-scripted soundbites, first for General Electric, and then to help the Republican Party to gain two terms in California and in Washington.

“Gifted with a photographic memory, he was also so burdened by it that he was the political equivalent of a ventriloquist's dummy.

“The implications of such a memory are lost on political commentators, including in relation to well-known Irish politicians and political commentators who possess it.” (Irish Examiner, 11.6.2004).

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continued on page 18

## On the Swallowing And Poisoning Of Nations

In your issue of July 2004 the editorial entitled *A Just War—or Just A War?* takes issue with an article by Professor Geoffrey Roberts of University College, Cork, which attacks de Valera's wartime neutrality in the *Irish Times* (June 24). You rightly point out that his article was a displacement of an argument from 30 years previously in the Communist Party of Great Britain. Roberts was at that time on the "Great Britain" wing of a dispute wherein that wing criticised "Stalinism" for not supporting the British war effort in 1939-41. Both wings were, of course, united in respect of 1941-45, including a contempt for de Valera. What Roberts was producing for the *Irish Times* therefore was a rehash of Churchillian-Stalinist propaganda.

An attempt by myself to point out that Ernest Bevin and Charles de Gaulle offered an Allied view of de Valera that was sharply at odds with such invective was, however, suppressed by the *Irish Times* on 29th June, when the following letter was denied publication:

Madam,

De Valera's neutrality was aimed at safeguarding Ireland from both fascism and war. It was subjected to vituperative denunciation by two of the victors, Churchill and Stalin. Feeling no need to crumble in the face of lectures on morality from either of these two, de Valera gave robust responses to both of them. When Geoffrey Roberts regurgitates the Churchillian-Stalinist denunciation of Ireland's neutrality as "morally unjustifiable" (June 24), he ignores the rather different judgments passed by other Allied leaders. At a diplomatic function in Brussels in 1948 the British Labour Government's Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin, who had served as Minister for Labour in Churchill's Wartime Coalition, effectively apologised to Ireland for his former Prime Minister's bellicose outburst on VE-Day. For the benefit of the representatives of every other nation present, Bevin publicly and emphatically addressed the Irish representatives as follows:

"I want our Irish friends to know that, during all those months of preparation (for D-Day) not a single leakage of information occurred through Ireland. In order to enforce our restrictions on travel and communication, which were very

severe, we had to take the top Irish officials into our confidence... They gave great co-operation unstintingly, and NOT ONE SINGLE LEAK OCCURRED (Bevin's own repeated emphasis). This is a great tribute to the Irish Government and the Irish officials concerned."

But what of the Allied leader of a country that had actually been occupied by Nazi Germany? In March 1945, when the Irish Minister to France, Sean Murphy, had a private audience with de Gaulle in Paris, he recorded some of the General's responses as follows:

"He replied that he was 'very touched' by Mr de Valera's messages and he asked me to transmit his thanks and his good wishes. Ireland and France, he said, had always been friendly... We shall need all our friends after the war. He (de Gaulle) expressed his great admiration for the Taoiseach and the manner in which he had kept his country neutral... There is great rivalry amongst the United Nations. We don't know where we stand. 'England', he said again with a smile, 'is always England'. I don't think for an Irishman I need add any more."

When it comes to passing judgment on de Valera's policy and conduct of Irish neutrality, both de Gaulle and Bevin are indeed healthy antidotes to Churchill and Stalin.

Yours sincerely, Manus O'Riordan.

A lot more might have been said of Roberts's world-view as revealed in his article, but should certainly be said now. Although ostensibly sharing in part the Ulster Unionist critique of Southern neutrality, Roberts also displays a chilling contempt for the one million Ulster Protestants he obviously would have regarded as expendable fodder in the "Greater Britain" interests of Churchill. Referring to the "Now or Never. A Nation Once Again" telegram from Churchill to de Valera, Roberts concurs with the view that "the Northerners would have come under irresistible pressure" from the British to agree to Irish unity and he obviously would have approved of the steamrolling of any Ulster Protestant national rights that stood in the way of Churchill's grand designs.

There is little to distinguish the value system of Roberts's Churchillian logic from its Stalinist counterpart. Albania was

once noteworthy as having been the last Stalinist outpost in Europe, not least because Stalin had thwarted Tito's plans to annex Albania to a Greater Yugoslavia. But this only happened when Stalin saw Tito emerging with a strategy of Yugoslav neutrality in the Cold War that was as anathema to him as de Valera's neutrality had been to Churchill. But when Stalin and Tito had been allies there were no differences in their Albanian policy, except that Stalin believed in calling a spade a spade.

In his 1961 book *Conversations With Stalin* Milovan Djilas recalls how in early 1948 he led a Yugoslav delegation to Moscow following the suicide of one of the Albanian leaders who had been trying to resist a Yugoslav takeover:

"After the customary greetings, Stalin immediately got down to business: 'So, members of the Central Committee in Albania are killing themselves over you! This is very inconvenient, very inconvenient'.

"I began to explain: Naku Spiru was against linking Albania with Yugoslavia; he isolated himself in his own Central Committee. I had not even finished when, to my surprise, Stalin said: 'We have no special interest in Albania. We agree to Yugoslavia swallowing Albania! ..' At this he gathered together the fingers of his right hand and, bringing them to his mouth, he made as to swallow them.

"I was astonished, almost struck dumb by Stalin's manner of expressing himself and by the gesture of swallowing, but I do not know whether this was visible on my face, for I tried to make a joke of it and to regard this as Stalin's customary forcible and picturesque manner of expression. Again I explained: 'It is not a matter of swallowing, but unification!' At this Molotov interjected: 'But that is swallowing!' And Stalin added, again with that gesture of his: 'Yes, yes. Swallowing! But we agree with you: you ought to swallow Albania—the sooner the better'.

"Despite this manner of expression, the whole atmosphere was cordial and more than friendly. Even Molotov said his piece about swallowing with an almost humorous amiability which was hardly usual with him".

Roberts obviously feels that, if de Valera had responded to Churchill's blandishments, Ulster Protestants might justifiably have been swallowed in like manner. (Although Roberts is, of course, no longer so crudely Stalinist in his mode of expression.) But what if Roberts has completely misjudged the significance of Churchill's telegram to de Valera? The inside story from both the Irish (de Valera

himself) and the British (Sir John Maffey, later Lord Rugby) perspective has recently been related by Dev's youngest son in his family reminiscences, simply entitled *A Memoir*. He recalls:

"With the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour on 7 December 1941, it was clear that this action would add another dimension to the war, inevitably bringing the USA into the conflict. This action was bound to have repercussions for Ireland and its stance on neutrality. I could see that Father was perturbed, but he remained calm and resolute.

"I went to bed as usual on that night of 7 December. About 1.30 a.m. I heard the telephone ring. Father had an extension at his bedside, and shortly after that, I heard a noise in the corridor outside my room. I got up immediately and went to investigate, and there I saw Father wearing a dressing gown over his pyjamas. He was not wearing his glasses and his hair was somewhat dishevelled. He looked in my direction and said in a strong, stern voice: 'Go back to your room and do not come out unless I call you'. From his expression, I knew that something really serious was afoot. I obeyed his command and returned to my room at once. Within twenty to twenty-five minutes or so, I heard a car coming up the avenue and stopping. Then I heard a man's voice and the hall door opening. A moment later, there was voices in Father's study which was on the floor beneath my bedroom. While I could not hear the exact words, it was clear to me that Father and some man were deep in conversation. Within half an hour or so, the voices moved to the hall, followed by the sound of a car driving away. Father then came up the stairs, walked into his room and closed the door.

"Next morning, he told me that the mysterious caller was none other than the British Representative, Sir John Maffey. He went on to say that Maffey had been sent to deliver a special message from Churchill—the famous 'Now or never note'. Father's first reaction was that this might be an ultimatum, but even before Maffey handed him the note, he (Maffey) said that Churchill was in very high spirits celebrating America's almost certain entry into the war. In fact, Father told me that Maffey told him that Churchill was highly intoxicated and was sending telegrams in all directions. As always in serious matters, he remained calm and decided to let some days pass so he could examine the contents of the note more closely and discover what its true intention may have been.

"Some commentators have tried to maintain that Father turned down an offer by Churchill to end partition when he used the words 'Now is your chance, now or never, a nation once again.' Such

a theory is without foundation, grossly misleading and patently false, for to take one important point alone, the unionists in the North had not been consulted. Certainly I can confirm that when Father told me the story of Maffey's visit, he did not mince his words in describing Churchill as being 'drunk' the night in question. The use of such strong words as 'drunk' would not have been used by Father unless he was quite satisfied that it was appropriate to the circumstances. I have always known his passion for accuracy in the use of words. Father was, however, much more concerned that this note was some form of threat or ultimatum. As he told me, his primary worry and concern at this point in time was not the solution to partition but rather the grave danger of an imminent invasion by the British or some pretext for such. Like other serious crises during the war, this one too passed".

As Terry de Valera reveals, it was not so much swallowing nations as swallowing booze that was behind that particular telegram. But it is also clear that he is far from consequently regarding Churchill as a harmless if not benign neighbour when it comes to the wartime threat posed to Ireland. This *Memoir* is indeed a most informative read. In an otherwise warm-hearted review in the *Irish Times* (July 17), however, Garret Fitzgerald makes the following charge against the younger de Valera:

"In the context of the War, he sees Churchill as having been concerned 'simply to satisfy his own selfish imperial aims and personal lust for power'—which seems an odd verdict on the man who saved Europe, including Ireland, from Nazism".

Since it was actually Stalin who had saved Europe from Nazism, one night justifiably enquire what odd verdict Garret himself might have on Stalin. But that would be a detour from the main point: that he has totally torn Terry de Valera's quote out of context—for it had nothing to do with Churchill confronting Nazism in Europe. Terry de Valera's own antipathy towards Nazism and Hitler's war from the very outset of his invasion of Poland is made patently manifest throughout the book. The quote that FitzGerald completely tears out of context, however, specifically refers to the war crimes that Churchill was quite prepared to contemplate committing in Ireland itself. De Valera writes:

"The popular view today, and for some time past, is to create the impression that the only threat of invasion of Ireland during World War Two came from Germany. This is far from the truth.

Invasion by the British was just as likely, if not more so, and it is now known that the British had drawn up detailed plans for this. What is so terrifying to realise, is that had Germany invaded, Churchill, on the advice of his air chiefs, was fully prepared to order and sanction the saturation of large portions of the Irish population using mustard and phosgene gases, calculated to cause maximum pain, suffering and lingering death to countless Irish people, both in the south and in the north. The consequences of such diabolical action would have been horrific. It appears that there was no such plans by the Germans to use gas against the Irish. It should not be forgotten that the British, and Churchill in particular, were quite prepared to wipe out large portions of the Irish population by using the most ghastly methods imaginable. This Churchill would do simply to satisfy his own selfish imperial aims and personal lust for power".

Perhaps Garrett FitzGerald does not wish to believe Terry de Valera's home truths about Churchill. But his source is impeccably accurate—John P. Duggan's 1985 book *Ireland And The Third Reich*, in which Duggan brought to light a secret British war cabinet memo of October 8, 1940 that reveals Churchill's agreement with an RAF plan to drench Ireland with poison-gas in the event of any German troops landing here. As Duggan elaborated:

"A requirement was outlined, in the event of the Germans setting up a bridgehead in Ireland, of spraying their landing sites and axes of advance with poison gases, including mustard gas which would have caused incapacitating blistering of the lungs and respiratory tract. There was also a phosgene gas which would kill by choking. It would not separate Irish from German, and no thought seems to have been given as to the possible effects on the Irish civilian population, north or south. This could hardly have been termed assistance to repel the German invasion. A bomber squadron at Feltwell in Suffolk was equipped with gas spray containers for the contingency".

The May 2003 issue of *Irish Political Review* published a letter from myself on this issue that had been refused publication when sent to the *Irish Times* 24th on March of that year. By twisting Terry de Valera's sentence out of context in his *Irish Times* review, Garret FitzGerald has connived with that paper's policy of suppressing information on Churchill's plans to use weapons of mass destruction on the Irish people. But thank heavens we still have de Valera's prepared to say that the Emperor has no clothes!

**Manus O'Riordan**

# War, Appeasement And Bomber Bull

## Part Three of *The Irish Times* Defends Terror Bombing

In Part One of this series we examined the *Irish Times* defence of the RAF bombing of Dresden's civilians and refugees in February 1945. Part Two looked at the apprenticeship of Bomber Bull in Iraq and Afghanistan in the 1920s and 1930s and the British subversion of European attempts to outlaw civilian bombing in the 1930s. Part three now examines the relationship between the policy of appeasement and the principles of terror bombing—a means by which the British believed they could win wars by terrorising the enemy's civilian populations into submission and thus avoiding military casualties on the scale of the Great War.

We are sure our readers can see the relevance of this for today.

Appeasement is a dirty word these days. "*Bomb the bastards!*" is very much the order of the day, from White House to Westminster. Of course, it can never be put like that, since such a dirty business has to be done underneath the flag of Democracy and Human Rights these days, and in best possible taste.

But in this month's history we will show that old Bomber Bull and his nephew and successor, Bomber Sam, are at one with the spirit of the appeasers of the 1930s—those awful people we are warned against today, to encourage us to support the bombing of the Islamic-fascist bastards, from Gaza to Afghanistan.

The concept of strategic area bombing (or 'terror bombing'), which the RAF adopted in World War II and used in the Dresden and other massacres, was based upon the strategies and policies laid down and applied by the Royal Flying Corps in 1917-8. Sir Charles Webster and Dr. Noble Frankland note in their book, *The Strategic Air Offensive Against Germany*, that: "*Sir Hugh Trenchard, Chief of the Air Staff from 1919 to 1929, had a decisive influence on the future of the R.A.F.*" (Vol.1, p42, issued by H.M. Stationery Office, London, 1961).

They explain that the essence of his policy was that—

"future wars would be won by producing such moral effect on the

enemy civilian population that its government would have to sue for peace. The advantage of destroying military installations and factories was recognised but he maintained that it was easier to overcome the will to resist among the workers than to destroy the means to resist" (p86).

Trenchard, the '*father*' of the Royal Air Force, authoritatively described the role that strategic bombers should play in war in a study prepared for the Allied Supreme War Council in 1918. He specified two main objectives for the strategic bomber—to destroy the enemy both morally and materially. In order to achieve this end, he argued the need to attack enemy industrial centres where striking at the centres of production could do vital damage. This entailed precision bombing. But he also argued for achieving the maximum effect on the morale of the enemy by striking at the most vulnerable part of the German population—the working class. This entailed area bombing. In the years that followed British air war strategists almost completely abandoned the idea of precision bombing in favour of the strategy of anti-civilian bombing. And, in doing so, they not only killed hundreds of thousands of women and children needlessly, they also prolonged the war against Germany.

Carroll Quigley, the American geopolitics professor, is not widely read in Britain and Ireland. His 1348-page book, *Tragedy And Hope—A History Of The World In Our Time*, is one of the most interesting works of twentieth century history. In it he concludes that strategic bombing was not, as the *Irish Times* concluded in the case of Dresden, a "*masterstroke*" that "*went horribly right,*" but a great failure:

"...the strategic bombing of Germany was mishandled from the beginning until almost the end of the war. Correctly, such strategic bombing should have been based on careful analysis of the German war economy to pick out the one or two critical items which were essential to the war effort. These items were probably ball bearings, aviation fuels, and chemicals, all of them essential and all of them concentrated.

After the war German general Gotthard Heinrici said that the war would have ended the year earlier if the allied bombing had been concentrated on ammonia plants. Whether this is correct or not, the fact remains that strategic bombing was largely a failure, and was so from poor choice of targets and from long intervals between repeated attacks. Relentless daily bombardment, with heavy fighter escort, day after day, in spite of losses, with absolute refusal to be distracted to area or city bombing because of losses or shifting ideas might have made a weighty contribution to the defeat of Germany and shortened the war substantially. As it was, the contribution by strategic bombing to the defeat of Germany was relatively incidental, in spite of the terrible losses suffered in the effort.

"Indiscriminate bombing of urban areas... was justified with the wholly mistaken arguments that civilian morale was a German weak point and that the destruction of workers' housing would break this morale. The evidence shows that the German war effort was not weakened in any way by lowering of civilian morale, in spite of the horrors heaped upon it... the British effort to break German civilian morale by area night bombing was an almost complete failure. In fact, one of the inspiring and amazing events of the war was the unflinching spirit under unbearable attack shown by ordinary working people in industrial cities" (pp800-2).

Attacking German workers, destroying their morale and hopefully provoking them to revolt against their leaders, was a widely held notion among the British military circles prior to the Great War—only then the plan was that the Royal Navy would carry out the strategy by sea blockade. Trenchard took the Naval blockade strategy that England had planned against Germany from 1903, had used against the civilian population between 1914 and 1919, and then applied it to air warfare, for the next war on Germany.

Trenchard's belief in the awesome power of strategic area bombing was elaborately substantiated by the Italian Air Force general and military philosopher, Giulio Douhet, who encapsulated strategic bombing into a coherent theory of air power in his book, *The Command Of The Air*, published in 1921. Douhet contended that the decision in future wars "*must depend upon smashing the material and moral resources of a people caught up in a frightful cataclysm which haunts them everywhere without cease until the final collapse of all social organisation... the decisive blows will be directed at civilians, that element of the country at war least*

able to sustain them” (p.54, English edition of 1943).

Douhet warned that Europe would have to reconsider its rules of warfare and institute a reversal of historical principles of honour taken for granted till then. A new principle of warfare was required:

“...this general principle of war...seems inhuman to us because of the traditional notion which must be changed. Everyone says, and is convinced of it, that war is no longer a clash between armies, but is a clash between nations, between whole populations. During the last war this clash took the form of a long process of attrition between armies, and that seemed natural and logical. Because of its direct action, the air arm pits populations directly against populations, and does away with the intervening armour which kept them apart during the past war. Now it is actually populations and nations which come to blows and sees each other's throats.

“This fact sharpens that peculiar traditional notion which makes people weep to hear of a few women and children killed in an air raid, and leaves them unmoved to hear of thousands of soldiers killed in action. All human lives are equally valuable; but because tradition holds that the soldier is fated to die in battle, his death does not upset them much, despite the fact that the soldier, a robust young man, should be considered to have the maximum individual value in the general economy of humanity...

“Any distinction between belligerent and non-belligerent is no longer admissible today either in fact or theory.

“War is won by crushing the resistance of the enemy; and this can be done more easily, faster, more economically, and with less bloodshed by directly attacking the resistance at its weakest point. The more rapid and terrifying the arms are, the faster they will reach the vital centres and the more deeply they will affect moral resistance” (pp158-9).

The first two British wars of the twentieth century—the conquest of South Africa and the Great War on Germany—changed the nature of war in Europe and the world: limited wars with limited objectives fought with mercenary troops were replaced by unlimited wars of economic attrition with unlimited objectives fought with national armies. This had far-reaching consequences. The distinction between combatants and non-combatants and between belligerents and neutrals became blurred and ultimately indistinguishable. International law, which had grown up in the period of the limited dynasty wars, made a great deal of such distinctions. Previously, non-combatants had extensive rights directed to protecting

their ways of life as much as possible during periods of warfare; and neutrals had similar rights. In return, there were strict duties on noncombatants to remain non-participants in the fighting. All these distinctions broke down in 1914-1915, with the result that there were wholesale violations of existing international law and conventions of honour.

These violations were more extensive on the part of the Entente side than on the German/Austria-Hungarian side. That is incontrovertible, despite the attempt to distort the matter by Redmondite anti-German atrocity propagandists in the British press.

Violations were more prevalent by the Entente because the Germans still maintained the older traditions of the professional army, and their geographical and strategic position—with limited manpower and economic resources—made it to their advantage to maintain the distinctions between combatant and non-combatant and between belligerent and neutral. Maintaining the traditional distinctions of former conflicts meant only having to fight the enemy army and not the enemy civilian population. And, with military victory, there would be little to fear from the non-combatants, who were controllable with a minimum of troops. If traditional rules of war could have been maintained, with their distinction between belligerent and neutral, the strategy of blockade could not have been used against Germany, since basic supplies could have been imported through neutral countries.

German military planning called for a short, decisive war against enemy armed forces. Germany did not expect or desire a total economic mobilisation or even a total military mobilisation, since these might disrupt its existing social and political structure in what was a very successful socialised economy. For these reasons, Germany made no plans for industrial or economic mobilisation, for a long war, or for withstanding a blockade, and hoped to mobilise a smaller proportion of its manpower than its immediate enemies to defend herself.

But ‘German atrocities’ in Belgium—which came about when Belgian civilians were encouraged to blur the distinction between combatant and non-combatant by indulging in behind the lines terrorist attacks on German supply lines—were taken out of context and greatly exaggerated by Irish war propagandists like Tom Kettle, and then used by Britain to justify its own violations of international

law which had been planned long before. As early as August 1914, the Royal navy was treating food as contraband and interfering with neutral shipments of it to Europe. In November 1914 Britain declared the whole sea from Scotland to Iceland a ‘war-zone’, covered it with fields of mines, and ordered ships going to the Baltic, Scandinavia, or to the Low Countries to go by way of the English Channel, where they were stopped, searched, and much of their cargo seized, even when these cargoes could not be declared contraband under existing international law. In reprisal the Germans on 18th February 1915 declared the English Channel a ‘war-zone’, announcing that their submarines would sink shipping in that area, and ordered shipping for the Baltic area to use the route north of Scotland.

It was further declared by Liberal England and Redmondite Ireland that there could be no neutrals in the fight between Democracy and Prussianism. And so more and more of neutral Europe was sucked in to the conflict as Britain extended the war into a world conflict.

Italy was one of those countries that had been neutral at the start of the Great War, but had been encouraged by British demonstrations of force in the Mediterranean and Dardanelles into seeing where its future interests lay and joining with the *Entente*. And the Italian officer, Douhet was one such—along with his compatriot Mussolini—who was impressed by this show of force and reorientated Italian strategic thinking accordingly.

Between 1918 and 1939 Douhet's ideas on air warfare, along with Hugh Trenchard's proposals, were readily accepted and implemented by the British Government which began to regard area bombing as a necessary part of warfare, regardless of the fact that it was regarded as immoral by others—including even Hitler.

Douhet's theory also received support from the Commander-in-Chief of the USAAF, General Billy Mitchell. Trenchard, Douhet and Mitchell were unanimous in predicting that future wars could be won by airpower alone, and that terror air attacks on cities with high explosives, incendiary bombs and gas by air forces acting independently of ground troops, could destroy a nation's will to resist. The view that “*the bomber would always get through*” to the enemy country, no matter what happened, was expressed by Stanley Baldwin, the British Prime Minister. It provided a boost to the

arguments of air theorists that the bomber would win wars for whichever country that possessed them.

Carroll Quigley noted the link between the ideas of Trenchard/Douhet and the 1930s policy of appeasement:

“Acceptance of Douhetism by civilian leaders in France and England was one of the key factors in appeasement and especially in the Munich surrender of September 1938... the Chamberlain government reflected these ideas and prepared the way to Munich by issuing 35 million gas masks to city dwellers... in spite of the erroneous ideas of Chamberlain, Baldwin, Churchill, and the rest, the war opened and continued for months with no city bombing at all, for the simple reason that the Germans had no intentions, no plans, and no equipment for strategic bombing. The British, who had the intentions but still lacked the plans and equipment, also held back.” (Tragedy And Hope—A History Of The World In Our Time, pp799-800.)

Appeasement facilitated the rise of Bomber Bull because England had been made reluctant to fight another large scale land war in Europe after the experiences of the Great War.

It should be understood that England, prior to the Great War, had always fought its wars using others as cannon-fodder—the Irish, mercenaries and foreign powers. The intention of the Liberal Imperialist coterie in 1914 was to fight the Great War in a similar fashion—albeit with a 100,000 strong expeditionary force which Haldane had built up during the decade before the war to aid the encirclement of Germany and Austria France and Russia

But the Great War did not turn out as planned. It was not over by Christmas because Germany was able to resist the armies of France and Russia, and England had to commit much more of her population to the war to crush her. A negotiated peace was impossible since the fight had been declared to be one of Good against Evil and there could be no compromise with Evil. Conscription had to be introduced in England and it took years to break down the German defences at a very high cost—particularly in terms of personnel and resources.

The high level of middle-class casualties had a serious effect on the British will to wage this kind of war again. And it was determined that it should be avoided, if at all possible. This was one aspect determining the appeasement policy of the 1930s (the other being the hope that Hitler could be encouraged to attack the Soviet Union).

So what went hand in hand with the ‘appeasement’ policy was the terror bombing policy—a means of waging war against an enemy civilian population without committing large numbers of English manhood to the fields that had taken so much of its blood in the Great War.

In the 1930s all the countries of Europe wished to avoid another Great War. And yet there was a continuing and escalating feeling that, after Versailles, another war was almost inevitable. The problem that confronted the military command of each country was therefore how, if another war should come, to avoid anything like the 4 years of trench warfare that had characterised the First World War. A quick and decisive result was necessary.

Quigley made the following comments on the British appeasers and advocates of Douhet’s theories:

“The military advocates of such air bombardment concentrated their attention on what was called strategic bombing, that is, on the construction of long-range bombing planes for use against industrial targets and other civilian objectives and on very fast fighter planes for defence against such bombers. They generally belittled the effectiveness of anti-aircraft artillery and were generally warm advocates of an air force separately organised and commanded and not under direct control of army or naval commanders. These advocates were very influential in Britain and in the United States.

“The upholders of strategic bombing received little encouragement in Germany, in Russia, or even in France, because of the dominant position held by traditional army officers in all three of these countries. In France, all kinds of air power was generally neglected, while in the other two countries strategic bombing against civilian objectives was completely subordinated in favour of tactical bombing of military objectives immediately on the fighting front. Such tactical bombing demanded planes of a more flexible character, with shorter range than strategic bombers and less speed than defensive fighters, and under the close control of the local commanders of the ground forces so that their bombing efforts could be directed, like a kind of mobile and long range artillery, at those points of resistance, of supply, or of reserves which would help the ground offensive most effectively. Such dive-bombers or Stukas played a major role in the early German victories of 1939 to 41. Here, again, this superiority was based on quality and method of usage and not on numbers” (Tragedy And Hope—A History Of The World In Our Time, p.665).

The English, basing their plans for war on Germany on the destruction of German cities and the killing of their inhabitants, affected to believe that Germany had similar plans for London. And they repeated the view that “*the bomber will always get through*” so that they could convince the general public that facilitating Hitler—in the hope he would go east against Soviet Russia—was a sound idea.

But, whilst the British banked on aerial bombing of civilian populations to save its soldiers from trench warfare, the Germans developed, within the confines of the Versailles restrictions on its military forces, the theory of fast mobile warfare supported from the skies—*Blitzkrieg*.

Britain was ill equipped to deal with the German strategy. It had decided a land war could not be won without years of costly static land warfare. And its War Office and military planners had decided the way to avoid the killing of Great War proportions was to directly attack the enemy at his weakest point, his civilians, so that such a conflict could be shortened, with consequently fewer British military casualties.

If warfare could be at all humane, the German method was humane warfare. At the opening of conflict in 1939-40, Nazi Germany decided that, if it were forced into a new European War it would fight a fast, decisive and humane conflict. At the same time democratic, appeasing England was relying on terrorism from the air. The German Army, even under Nazi direction, practised *Blitzkrieg* using air power in support of distinct military objectives. And it achieved what it could not do in 4 years in 1914-8—routing the Anglo-French armies in 4 weeks with fantastically minimal casualties on both sides.

The traditional aim of European armies was to destroy the enemy combatants will to fight by physical destruction of those on the enemy side who could defend themselves, the armed forces. And that is how the Nazis fought the Anglo-French forces.

If war is defined as a conflict between two bodies equipped to fight, and terrorism is military action against people who are not equipped to fight, it must be conceded that Britain was the pioneer of terrorism in the 20th century and the British State was the original state sponsor of terrorism. And Bomber Sam has learnt well from his Anglo-Saxon uncle, Bomber Bull, from whom he received his torch—to go about the world, bombing under the flag of Democracy and Human Rights.

**Pat Walsh**

## British PM Initiated ‘White Nigger Meeting’

Readers will recall the report of a meeting of the British Ambassador to Dublin with Major Thomas McDowell, which has been reproduced in this magazine (January 2003 and May 2004). Andrew Gilchrist records McDowell’s description of Gageby as acting like a “white nigger” in his editorial function as regards Northern Ireland.

Other correspondence between Downing Street and the British Foreign Office indicates that the meeting in question, between Andrew Gilchrist and Major McDowell on 2nd October 1969, was initiated by the British Prime Minister, Harold Wilson. This puts a new light on the denials of *The Irish Times*, which were published on 27th January 2003.

In his *Irish Times* denial, McDowell did not contest that there was such a meeting but denied that he used the word “white nigger” about Douglas Gageby when talking to British Ambassador Andrew Gilchrist in October 1969. He also denied that there was any interference by himself or other members of the Board in the editorial judgement of Gageby.

On the Sunday following McDowell’s denials, *The Sunday Independent*’s Ronan Fanning queried the denials of *The Irish Times* and asked whether it was credible that a British Ambassador would lie to his own foreign office. He concluded that such a notion “*beggars belief*”. There was no response to this from *The Irish Times*.

In assessing the credibility of McDowell’s denials it is important to understand that the meeting between Gilchrist and Major McDowell was not just a chance occurrence. It was the response of the British Government to McDowell’s attempt to contact Downing Street the previous month. Remember we are talking of September 1969—just weeks after the breakdown of law and order in Northern Ireland had provoked the Irish Government into taking steps to protect the Catholic minority in Northern Ireland by all possible means.

Peter Gregson, one of the private secretaries to the British Prime Minister Harold Wilson, wrote a letter dated 16th September 1969 to Mrs Valerie Hartles (MBE) of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The letter indicates that McDowell

attempted to make contact with Downing Street’s Political Office from the Naval and Military Club in London. But Downing Street was unable to return his call before he left London.

In the second paragraph of his letter Gregson says the following regarding Major McDowell’s attempted contact with Downing Street:

“I have discussed this with the Prime Minister, and he thinks that it would be desirable for our Embassy in Dublin to make contact with Major McDowell when he gets back. He thinks that Major McDowell’s offer of assistance may relate more to intelligence than to journalistic activity.”

There are three interesting things about the above paragraph:

- 1) The British Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, took an interest in McDowell’s contact. This indicates that McDowell was well known right up to the very top among British ruling circles.
- 2) The famous meeting between Gilchrist and Major McDowell was initiated by Harold Wilson.
- 3) Wilson was under the impression that McDowell was in the business

of supplying intelligence. This seems to confirm the entry in the published diary of *Daily Mirror* proprietor Cecil King that McDowell was in MI5.

A copy of this letter appears to have been sent by Kelvin White of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to Andrew Gilchrist. In his covering letter to Gilchrist dated 24th September 1969 White says:

“In view of the second paragraph of the enclosure I am marking this ‘Secret and Personal’”.

So by the time Gilchrist was ready to meet McDowell on 2nd October 1969, he was aware that this was a very important meeting and that his Prime Minister was taking an interest in it. It is certain that Gilchrist listened very carefully to what McDowell had to say. When the meeting had finished he returned to his office and wrote the famous “white nigger” letter that same day.

The “white nigger” letter is a description of a meeting which occurred on the day the letter was written whereas McDowell’s denials come more than thirty years after the event. While it is easy to see why McDowell would not want the details of such a meeting to be publicised, it is almost impossible to explain why Gilchrist would lie in his secret correspondence to his superiors, knowing that one of the recipients of the information would be the British Prime Minister.

**John Martin**

### Salary Of McDowell

As expected, Fintan O’ Toole has been shrill in his denunciations of the Irish bosses of Allied Irish Banks following the latest allegations concerning that institution. In his column of 1st June 2004 he says that, in 1999 when Tom Mulcahy was chief executive, he earned 817,000 pounds (including bonuses, perks, and pension contributions).

How does this compare with other executives? In particular, how does it compare to *The Irish Times* executives? Unfortunately, we have to go to other newspapers to answer that question. According to *The Sunday Business Post* (18.11.01), the combined salary of Major McDowell and his daughter “has been reported as being in excess of 850,000 pounds”. An *Irish Independent* report (21.12.01) confirms this figure. It says:

“It is understood that Major McDowell (78) and his daughter Karen Irwin, who is group legal counsel, were paid a total of £850,000 last year.”

The *Irish Independent* report adds:

“Major McDowell’s chauffeur and gardener were also on the payroll.”

So by *Irish Times* standards Tom Mulcahy was seriously underpaid. After all AIB is an institution that earns profits of over 1 billion euros every year and employs about 26,000 people. The *Irish Times* on the other hand lost nearly three million euros in 2002. A few years ago it employed over 700 people, but because of its financial problems it planned for redundancies of 250.

But of course, I’m being unfair. The AIB is Irish and *The Irish Times* is... Well we’re not quite sure what it is. But the more we look into it, the stranger it becomes.

### Conflict Of Interest?

On the subject of Banking, does anyone besides *The Irish Political Review* think that there is a conflict of interest in Brian Patterson being both the chairman of *The Irish Times* and of The Irish Financial Services Regulatory Authority? The IFSRA was the regulatory authority that the AIB reported to when it realised it had a problem.

# Gageby Obituaries

Undoubtedly the most informative obituary on Douglas Gageby was from Tim Pat Coogan in the *Irish Independent* (29.1.04).

Coogan mentions the “famous letter” (aka “the Gilchrist letter”, aka “the white nigger letter”). Understandably he doesn’t mention Jack Lane or the *Irish Political Review* in this connection. Even if he had wanted to, it would have taken a separate article to deal adequately with who first discovered it and who first brought it to the attention of the Irish Public.

Coogan suggests—and what other conclusion could any reasonable person make—that there was a “clash of loyalties between his [i.e. Gageby’s] Trinity nationalism and the pro-British sentiments of his chairman Major McDowell”.

However, in some respects Coogan’s piece is also disappointing. He suggests that Gageby surmounted the difficulties presented by McDowell. While it is conceivable that, for all his legal powers, McDowell didn’t have things all his own way, it is inconceivable that his influence was negligible.

Coogan also suggests that the interference from McDowell was of a kind with the interference that Gageby experienced at *The Evening Press*. But no one was under any illusions about The Press Group’s papers and what they represented. However, if McDowell was acting in the interests of a foreign State, that is a completely different matter.

In discussing the conflict between Douglas Gageby and McDowell, Coogan says “*Douglas had a contempt for Unionist politicians and what they had wrought*”.

But if McDowell was a Unionist in 1969, British influence would have had a moderating effect, because the long-term aim of Britain in Ireland is a united Ireland under British hegemony. So the disagreements between McDowell and Gageby would have been far more subtle than is suggested by Coogan.

Finally, the most extraordinary statement in Coogan’s piece is that Gageby’s “*respect for journalism led him to work for the setting-up of the Irish Times Trust in 1974*”.

But there is no evidence of Gageby having any influence on the restructuring of 1974. By contrast, McDowell’s

fingerprints are all over it. *The Sunday Times* of 18th November 2001 says that the latter received legal advice from Lord Alan Goodman, who also advised Harold Wilson during the Profumo affair.

The 2,000 word obituary in *The Irish Times*, by contrast, doesn’t mention McDowell once. A second, slightly shorter, piece by Conor Brady (*Irish Times* Editor 1986 to 2002) mentions that the relationship between McDowell and Gageby was an “enigma”. But Brady makes no attempt to solve the enigma even though throughout the first period that Gageby was Editor (1963 to 1974) McDowell was Chief Executive. In the second period of his Editorship (1977 to 1986) McDowell was both Chairman and Chief Executive.

The only interesting item in Brady’s piece is the revelation that Gageby said to him that the articles in *The Irish Times* on the Garda “*Heavy Gang*” in the mid seventies under Fergus Pyle’s editorship would never have been published if he had been editor then. There are two ways of looking at this: one is that Pyle was a more fearless editor; the other is that Gageby was more loyal to the Irish State than the McDowell appointee.

The other Irish obituaries hardly mention McDowell, let alone the “white nigger letter”, although there was a passing reference to the letter in the “Last Post” section of *The Sunday Business Post*.

John Waters, who had his knuckles firmly wrapped when he last tried to discuss *The Irish Times Trust*, knew better than to raise that issue again in his piece on Gageby. However, he did manage to get the following comment on Irish journalism past *The Irish Times* censors. Apparently new recruits are:

“...vetted for correctness and placed under middle manager apparatchiks for a period of training in appropriate thinking and then sent out to affirm ‘truths’ we already ‘know’.”

## The English Obituaries

Most of the English obituaries were more informative than the Irish ones. W. J. McCormack—the defender of the Casement diaries’ authenticity (?)—tells us in *The Independent* (28.6.04) that when Gageby applied to the Irish army in 1942 his stated religion was “*Christian Science*”. He uses the word “*dram*” or a small drop to imply that the allegiance

didn’t last. But it would have been interesting to know how long he remained a member.

McCormack concluded his piece with a flippant remark of the type that could have come from George Bernard Shaw on an extremely bad day. Referring to the “white nigger” letter he makes the following comment regarding Gageby’s alleged reaction to it in his final year:

“The pity is that so few were able to appreciate his wry amusement at the original unintended compliment.”

It’s unclear whether Gageby’s actual reaction was one of “wry amusement at the original unintended compliment” or whether McCormack is projecting his own wishes on Gageby. I suspect the latter.

Either way, his flippancy enables him to avoid commenting on the letter.

Probably the most informative obituary was in *The Times* (7.7.04), despite being wrong almost as often as it is right. Commenting on *The Irish Times Trust* it says:

“Gageby and his fellow former proprietors remained in complete control and the financial affairs of the business were effectively hidden from public view.”

While the last part of that sentence is true enough—the financial affairs of the business were hidden from public view—I am unaware of any evidence of Gageby having any influence in the immediate aftermath of the establishment of the so called “Trust”. All the evidence is that control was vested in the hands of Major McDowell.

Commenting on the secrecy surrounding the so called “Trust” the article says that this was inconsistent “*in an organisation calling for accountability from all manner of persons and institutions*”.

Now why couldn’t the Irish competitors of *The Irish Times* have said that?!

*The Times* obituary also refers to the financial problems of *The Irish Times* in the years following the setting up of the so called “Trust” in 1974. In 1977 they had reached such a state that:

“...only Gageby’s return would satisfy its bankers”.

So Gageby’s appointment as editor in 1977 (“the second coming”) was forced on McDowell by financial circumstances.

Although *The Times* obituary was by far the best, the real mystery is how and why did McDowell become the dominant influence over *The Irish Times* in 1974? Unfortunately, none of the obituaries shed any light on this.

**John Martin**

# Pat Rabbittes On About History

On Monday January 27, 2003, Labour leader Pat Rabbittes gave an interview to the *Irish News* in the course of which he delved into the history of the party he has been leading this past wee while (having been a merged-sticky member of it just a wee while longer). The matter at issue was sort of to do with Labour organising North of the border (which for more than a wee while here and there in its history it has done, Jack Beattie for example was an Irish Labour Party candidate for Westminster). Said Mr. Rabbittes...

“Labour has in the past held discussions with the SDLP and the British Labour Party about the possibility of fielding election candidates in Northern Ireland—Sinn Féin’s backyard.

“However, Mr Rabbittes says that Labour has long taken a back seat to the ‘national question’.

“You can go back to the 1918 election where Eamon de Valera said that Labour must wait and that’s a dictum that has come to haunt Labour because it stepped aside. The cause of Labour was subordinated to the struggle for independence and the cause of Labour has suffered in the shadow of that struggle ever since.

“But I’m not sure that now is the time to start contesting elections in Northern Ireland. We’re at a fragile stage in the peace process and intrusion into the affairs of Northern Ireland now by any of the Republic of Ireland parties would not be helpful,” he said.”

The historical statement in the midst of that—“You can go back to the 1918 election where Eamon de Valera said that Labour must wait and that’s a dictum that has come to haunt Labour because it stepped aside”—is completely incorrect.

Enda Staunton, in his very detailed and well-researched work *The Nationalists Of Northern Ireland 1918 – 1973* (Columba Press, 2001) has this account of the origin of the “Labour Must Wait” tag...

“[Joe Devlin’s] solid support among the workers, particularly the mill girls, enabled him to thumb his nose at De Valera’s view that the national question took priority, a view summarised by Devlin and the *Irish News*, in words that reverberate through Irish history as ‘Labour can wait’.” (page 24)

Austen Morgan gives a little more detail (*Labour And Partition—The Belfast Working Class 1905 – 23*, Pluto Press 1991)—

“At the 1917 Sinn Féin árd fheis, de Valera had said that when labour helped free the country, it could ‘look for its own share of its patrimony’. It was Tom Johnson, in *Irish Opinion* of 1 December, who described Sinn Féin as asking that ‘Labour should wait until freedom is achieved’.”

And then during the 1918 election Joe Devlin used the ‘*Labour Must Wait*’ tag against de Valera (who was the, unsuccessful and by all accounts none too happy about it, Sinn Féin candidate in Wee Joe’s West Belfast).

So de Valera did not go into the 1918 election saying ‘*Labour Must Wait*’. Did Sinn Féin then somehow persuade, cajole or force the Labour Party to wait out the 1918 election? No, it did not.

“Sinn Féin were worried that Labour candidates could split the vote in some constituencies to the advantage of the Parliamentary Party. As a result they offered Labour a free run in some Dublin constituencies if they stood down in the rest. This would also be consequent on Labour candidates signing a pledge that they would abstain from Parliament if elected and would work for an independent Irish Republic, accepting nothing less than complete separation from England. For a time this was under serious consideration by the Labour Executive but was eventually rejected. First, it was felt that such an alliance would finally cause the northern membership to secede. As well, the question of whether to stand at all was the subject of a special delegate conference in early November. At this the delegates were presented with a motion from the Executive put by Tom Johnson in which he urged the temporary suspension of Labour’s electoral ambitions:

“A call comes from all parts of Ireland for a demonstration of unity on this question (of self-determination) such as was witnessed on the conscription issue. Your Executive believes that the workers of Ireland join earnestly in that desire, that they would willingly sacrifice for a brief period their aspirations towards political power if thereby

the fortunes of the nation can be enhanced.

“Furthermore, both the delegates and the Executive were aware that in Nationalist areas there was a groundswell among trade union members in favour of Sinn Féin, which they would oppose at their peril. Consequently, the motion to give Sinn Féin a clear run was passed by ninety-six votes to twenty-three. This was greeted by Sinn Féin with gratitude and by the Parliamentary party as the final nail in the coffin of a campaign that had run out of steam.” (Peter Collins in *Irish Labour And Politics In The Late Nineteenth And Early Twentieth Centuries*, which is an essay in *Nationalism & Unionism* which Mr. Collins edited for the QUB Institute of Irish Studies in 1994. Page 144.)

I would quarrel with some subsidiary aspects, with the tone and some of the timbre, of Mr. Collins’ account but the fact of the matter is clear: Sinn Féin offered the Labour Party a free run in some (actually it was four inner city) Dublin constituencies and the Labour Party, rather than taking that as the first round of some hard bargaining to follow, ran for cover.

Sinn Féin’s terms for an electoral pact were scarcely very onerous. The Labour Party was already pledged to independence. Abstention was already party policy. If four seats weren’t enough there was nothing stopping the Labour Party holding out for more. And four seats was better than no seats, except in the arithmetic of fear which doesn’t have any zero, just an abyss to fall into.

It’s not as if, after the election, the Labour Party left Sinn Féin entirely to its own devices. Tom Johnson drafted the Democratic Programme which Dáil Éireann adopted in January 1919 as its social policy.

Still the Labour Party didn’t recognise the Dáil in that period. It waited for a truly dark creature to emerge from the shadows and recognised that. Johnson and Cathal O’Shannon (who, give him his due, had voted for the electoral pact at the delegate conference) went to the international socialist conference at Berne in 1919 and supported a motion which condemned bourgeois democracy and demanded revolutionary dictatorship. They then came home and recognised (as its official Opposition) the Dáil which Lloyd George extorted at gunpoint from the Treaty negotiations. Mr. Rabbittes might someday be good enough to give us his take on that little bit of his party’s history. I would like

to be proved wrong but strongly suspect he would have no qualms about applauding it.

De Valera and Sinn Féin were not causative agents in the deal that the Labour Party struck with itself in 1918. Labour subordinated itself to a particularly narrow, demoralised and craven view of the struggle for independence. All by itself it put itself into the shadow; and did things in that shadow that could never have borne the light of day. And it is still in that shadow.

Daylight is waiting in Northern Ireland for a full-hearted electoral organisation of his party there. Can Mr. Rabbitte forget his false history and see to that?

**Joe Keenan**

## THE CLONBANIN COLUMN continued

*“A celebration of Irish achievement in all fields of human endeavour. Never before have the accomplishments of an entire people been encapsulated so comprehensively, meticulously and succinctly on the pages of a single book”*— thus *The Encyclopaedia Of Ireland* describes itself.

It cost near 60 Euro on publication!

An entry by Kevin Myers’ favourite historian, **Peter Hart**, goes thus:

**BARRY, Thomas (Tom) (1897-1980)**, revolutionary. Born in Killorglin, Co. Kerry.

*Tom Barry was a Kerryman and all this time we never knew!*

*The Encyclopaedia Of Ireland* is now remaindered at 19.99 Euro in Cork and £9.99 in Northern Ireland.

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## Nicholas Mansergh And Ireland, Part One

# Democracy On Trial

“It is a commonplace to say that Democracy is on its trial. If this statement is true—as I believe it to be true—then it is well to examine in the light of more than twelve years of practical experience the peculiar virtues and vices which Representative Government has displayed in our country”.

—That was written in a book published in London in 1934, with a Foreword by the Warden of All Souls College, Oxford, W.G.S. Adams, who had edited the *Political Quarterly* during the first two years of the 1st World War. The statement was true about the country in which it was published, and which the author served in his professional capacity. But, bizarrely, the statement was not made about Britain. The “our country” was Ireland.

The book is *The Irish Free State: Its Government And Politics*. The author is British civil servant and academic, Nicholas Mansergh. His Preface is dated, “Greenane House, Tipperary, July 1934”. But the fact that Mansergh was a British historian and civil servant is beyond serious dispute. He has 43 titles in the catalogue of the British Copyright Library, of which 31 are about the affairs of the British Empire and Commonwealth, written from the British viewpoint.

Mansergh took his degree at Oxford, and spent much of his life thereafter in connection with it. In the Second World War he had a position in the British Ministry of Information, a propaganda/espionage operation, where, according to a biographical sketch in the Cork University Press collection, *Nationalism and Ireland*,

“Mansergh had for a time special responsibility for Anglo-Irish information services and cultural relations and in 1944 was appointed head of the Empire division”.

In his book, *The Coming Of The First World War* (1949), he is described as “Professor of Commonwealth Relations at the Royal Institute of International Affairs since 1947”. (This Institute is generally called Chatham House in honour of the founder of the British Empire in Britain’s first World War 250 years ago.) He was appointed Editor-in-Chief of India Office documents in 1967. And the multi-volume Cambridge *History Of The British*

*Empire* appears under his name in the British Library Catalogue.

Mansergh was a British historian and civil servant, and was closely involved with Empire-Commonwealth Affairs in both capacities.

I have commented more favourably than most in recent decades about the British Empire, and more favourably than anybody else from the socialist side. Perhaps that is why I have not fetishised Democracy, as has generally been done in recent times. Whatever merits the Empire might have had, those merits had nothing whatever to do with democracy, either at home or abroad.

Britain launched its premeditated war on Germany in August 1914, in the name of Democracy and the Rights of Small Nations. Under those slogans it raised mass armies in Britain, Ireland, the Colonies (or Dominions), and the Empire to fight the war. And a year and a half later it raised an Arab army under a promise to recognise the Arabs as a state if they helped to destroy the Ottoman Empire. The promises which enabled it to fight its long and costly war against Germany and the Ottoman Empire were put to the test in 1919 in Ireland and the Middle East, when the Irish and the Arabs went about setting up their states. Both were treated as rebels and the Empire acted against them in the old-fashioned way.

The British Empire might have continued to exist, and even to flourish, if it had not committed itself to democracy and the rights of nations, but it could not have made war on Germany. It committed itself to democracy and the rights of nations for the purpose of making war. That commitment proved in the event to be a deception. I find it inconceivable that those who made the commitment did not know they were engaging in a deception. They knew it: but they also knew that the deception had to be made credible to those who were being deceived. And, given the subject, the profundity, and the scale of the deception, I think it is fair to describe it not only as the deception of the epoch, but a deception without precedent in human history. It was a kind of existential deception of humanity in general. And its catastrophic outcome is ongoing. The present condition of the Middle East, which

is the major source of disturbance in the world, is the direct result of it.

Democracy was on trial alright. The new democracy of Britain was on trial. And, because Britain was the dominant state in the world, democracy as a possible mode of existence for the world in general was on trial.

If democracy was on trial in Ireland it was in a very different sense from Britain. Britain was the centre of a world Empire. In 1919 it had emerged as victor in a World War—a Great War of its own making—in which many powerful states had been destroyed and their peoples thrown into disarray. The world was in flux. It was waiting to be shaped by Britain. Britain had gained what Charles James O'Donnell—who had served the Empire in India, called the *Lordship of the World*. Winston Churchill has spelled out what this meant:

“The British nation is now in the very forefront of mankind. Never was its power so great, its name so honoured, its rivals so few. The fearful sacrifices of the war, the stupendous victory with which it closed, not only in the clash of arms, but in the triumph of institutions and ideals, have opened to us several generations of august responsibility and splendid hope” (30.5.1920).

The world in 1919 was waiting for Britain to realise in practice the ideal for which it pretended to go to war in 1194. In 1934 it was still waiting.

The case of Ireland was altogether different. In December 1918 it availed of Britain's conversion to democratic principles to vote itself independent. Britain took no heed of the vote. It carried on governing Ireland as if it had not lost the Election there, and as if it was not obliged by its own proclamation about nationality in 1914 to give way to the vote of a national democracy.

Republican Ireland set about establishing institutions of independent government while Britain attempted to destroy them by terrorist action.

In 1920 the new democratic Parliament in Westminster decided to split Ireland in two and set up subordinate government in each part. Elections were held in Ireland in 1921 to give effect to the *1920 Government of Ireland Act*. Subordinate government in the Six Counties began to operate in the Summer of 1921.

The 1921 Elections in the 26 Counties returned Republican members for every

democratic constituency—only the privileged electorate of Trinity College returned representatives willing to operate the *Government of Ireland Act*.

With Partition an accomplished fact, Britain negotiated a Truce with Republican Ireland and began a long negotiation about a settlement. That negotiation ended in December 1921 with the signing of what was called a *Treaty*, even though it was not a treaty. The ‘Treaty’ was signed by the Irish negotiators in response to a threat that the military resources of the Empire would be brought to bear on Southern Ireland immediately if they did not sign. The Dail approved the ‘Treaty’ by a small majority acting under the influence of the threat. Six months later the electorate approved the ‘Treaty’ by a small majority, again acting under the influence of the threat.

Neither the negotiators nor the Dail nor the electorate approved of the treaty on its merits. It was accepted as the alternative to annihilation. Britain then instigated military conflict between those who accepted the ‘Treaty’ under duress and those who refused to do so, and it armed the ‘Treatyites’ for the conflict. The Treatyites won, and subordinate government under the Crown was established in place of the Republican government mandated by two general elections.

What does it mean to say in these circumstances that democracy was on trial among the Irish? What kind of conduct on the part of the Irish might be described as democratic? Submission to the doctrine of force which was at the heart of the ‘Treaty’?

Would Britain, when in democratic mode—that is, when scrutinising the affairs of an enemy—have recognised an election held under the threat of immediate and terrible war as a democratic event?

The nations of the Austro-Hungarian Empire were not held together by crude threats such as the British Prime Minister made to the Irish delegates in December 1921, yet Britain decreed that the Austrian Empire was an affront to national democracy and must be destroyed.

Many elections were held in the states of Eastern Europe after their liberation from Fascism in 1945. The outcome of these elections was for the most part determined by the presence in the country of the Army of the Liberator, and apprehen-

sion about the conduct of the Liberator if the result was wrong. Did Britain recognise those elections as democratic? If not, why should the Irish election of 1922 which sanctioned the Treaty be recognised as democratic? If we accept the standard version of the Second World War, then the Red Army liberated Poland, Czechoslovakia etc. from oppression. And it required that those whom it liberated should not go over to its enemy. And, if that requirement invalidated elections, how can it be argued that the 1922 election in Ireland was democratic? What did England ever liberate Ireland from that would entitle it to veto Irish election results in the name of democracy.

I suggest that the standard of democracy applied by Britain to the Austrian Empire, the Soviet sphere of influence, and Yugoslavia in recent times, required the Irish to resist the ‘Treaty’ imposed on them by Britain. And they did resist it. When, after the beating of 1922-3, “*breathing and consciousness returned*”, the electorate turned to the anti-Treatyites and put them in power for the purpose of breaking the Treaty. Democracy in Ireland emerged from its trial in pretty good shape. But that is not what Dr. Mansergh meant.

The slippery mode in which he handled the very awkward history of Britain in Ireland from 1918 to 1922 will be dealt with in a future article.

**Brendan Clifford**

## ‘Slab’ Murphy In The Spotlight

Raphael Rowe was the victim of a police stitch-up which cost him a decade and a half of a not very long life. It is a bit odd to find him ‘fronting’ a television programme dedicated to, in effect, ‘felon-setting’. The felons’ set are not on the whole particularly appetising people. Rowe’s current series is *Underworld Rich List*, the title is based on the *Sunday Times*’s *Rich List* (an annual publication, the necessity of which is a trifle obscure—very few people plunge out of the list into abject poverty). The programme for Sunday, 25th July (broadcast on BBC2, repeated from the obscure BBC3), was billed as the first of three, and was subtitled *Smugglers*.

We were promised insights into how criminals generate vast amounts of cash,

and how they spend it. The more canny ones, as you might expect, use their money to buy legitimate enterprises, or use already existing businesses to 'launder' the money. Others just spend too much cash, and tend to get caught. Buying pluralities of BMWs and building large holiday homes, when you are supposed to be earning a fairly standard middle class livelihood is not really recommended. Except by the police, who will spot who has too much money in the bank. Though one of the sets of criminals, from the English east midlands, was seen wandering about the more salubrious streets of London placing large amounts of paper money in banks. Their scam was cigarettes. A less amiable smuggler brought in people, mostly from Kashmir. These unfortunates handed over thousands of pounds, gathered from friends and neighbours, to be brought into western Europe. The Kashmiri who organised this, from Newcastle upon Tyne, hid (or 'laundered') the money by way of a chain of fast food shops.

Even where the people in question had been tried and convicted, there were some dubious elements in this programme. Rowe, or more precisely, the producers of the show, based their evidence entirely on the evidence brought forward by the police. Secret film footage, made by the police was used in *Smugglers*. But we were not told if it had been used in evidence, or was deemed by the Courts as permissible evidence. A certain amount of witness evidence was circumstantial, or came from persons who could be described as hostile witnesses.

When the programme turned its attention to (Northern) Ireland, this tendency became noticeable to the point of blatancy. This was because Thomas 'Slab' Murphy (the nickname was not explained) was deemed to be at nearly the top of the 'Rich List'. Rowe was seen listening to military men telling him that they used 'lateral thinking' to try to get Murphy behind bars. The fact that Murphy's membership of the Provisional IRA had not even been proved in the courts did not, apparently, come into the question.

Murphy is alleged to be the Chief of Staff of the IRA and also a big-time smuggler—of anything that will make some money (for the IRA—why he was then treated like a sleazy criminal like the dealer in men's bodies is difficult to guess. Unless, of course, the Beeb thinks the war against the IRA is not over. And if the Beeb thinks the war against the IRA is not over, then the Government almost certainly thinks the war against the IRA is not over).

Sean O'Callaghan, that detached observer, simply mentioned that Murphy would use the border, which runs through his farm, to smuggle anything. O'Callaghan, did not really play the part he was supposed to, in the sense that even he was taken by the mischievous nature of the 'crimes' of Murphy. He smiled at the notion of simply carting pigs around his own farm, to get the subsidies from both the UK and Republic authorities. He almost laughed out loud at the fact that Murphy had had an extension built to his farmhouse, so that when the RUC/British Army came to call at one door, he was 'outside the jurisdiction' as the Magistrate's Courts cliché used to put it. And *vice versa* when the Gárda Síochána and the Irish Army (aka, Oglai na hÉireann [!]), came to the other door. There was a slightly tiresome illustration of a cartful of pigs being driven around a field at this point. Probably because illustrating the scam to do with diesel would have cost real money. According to this prog Murphy was effectively pouring diesel into huge tanks under his property in the North, and practically simultaneously into tankers distributing the stuff in the 'Free State'. (The fact that any border positively incites anyone with a degree of spark to smuggle, and that Murphy's farm is near to a growing urban centre, Dundalk, appeared not to have been considered by the makers of this show.)

Other 'witnesses' included the journalist, Hugh Jordan, who described Murphy as a "*Mafia Don*". No questions appear to have been asked about Jordan's acceptability as a witness. He works for *The Sunday World*, which in Northern Ireland is a job-creation scheme for lapsed Stickies. He is still a member of the Workers' Party of Ireland, and is a former member of the Communist Party of Great Britain. How rational is he likely to be about a man who is supposedly enriching the IRA to the tune of £50 million according to this show? We also got 'Kevin Fulton', whose contribution to the 'evidence' was to the effect that Murphy was pretty ruthless in dealing with any interference with his enterprises. You could have knocked me over with a JCB—how is he expected to react to interference?

Jason McCue was also interviewed. He is from a fashionable legal firm, and now represents the Omagh Victims in their high-profile, multi-million civil case against five men they allege to have been responsible for the Omagh bombing. His contribution was one of the more interesting, he did the usual clucking about Murphy's criminality, and then he made a number of points. Murphy's enterprises have netted the IRA £50 million. (Despite

the not very hidden agenda here: Sinn Féin clearly finances itself.) If this £50 million figure is right, if all the arms acquired from Libya are still in working order, and if the IRA is still training its Volunteers—then what we have here is as he put it an "*incentive for the Peace Process*".

Given what the Provisionals were able to do starting from a position of having no arms or army, recommencing the shooting war with an intact army, with such a big sum of money to call on as well as all those arms and trained (and experienced) 'gunmen' would not be a very smart idea on the part of the UK authorities. (The Irish authorities, under Ahern, seem to be under the impression that they are running a sub-region of the UK. The honkie in the coal bunker is the US, the Bush administration seems not to have the attitude to the IRA the UK government would, clearly, like it to have.) The IRA, assuming it is not recruiting very heavily, is rather similar to the German army in the 1920s. This was described as 'an army of NCOs' (non-commissioned officers). Despite the fact that England 'won the war', its actual performance in the face of this army of NCOs is less than inspiring.

It would be unwise to over-egg this particular pudding, the UK (and even the Republic) has vastly greater resources to call on than any underground army. While £50m looks like a big bag of money in terms of 'criminality', the enemies of the IRA have effectively bottomless supplies of money and manpower. The British Army, apart from a comparatively short couple of periods in the twentieth century, has always been a mercenary force. If people from Great Britain prove ever more reluctant to join the armed forces, then it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that the UK would effectively buy another army. After all, in the eighteenth century, it was largely Germans who fought England's battles. In the Great War the French and the Russians shed their blood for the greater glory (and greater expansion) of the British Empire. And from 1941-45 it was the hated ideological enemy, the Red Army, that did the fighting in Europe (in the Pacific it was the US Air Force and a collection of clever scientists from, mostly, *Mittleuropa*.)

If this programme actually meant to show that Thomas 'Slab' Murphy was a sleazy crook, it signally failed. What it did demonstrate is the fact that the IRA is a more formidable force now that it is not shooting than when it was creating mayhem in Northern Ireland and 'on the mainland'.

**Seán McGouran**

## ILDA continued

complainants had left SIPTU to join ILDA. It was incredible. Cynical even. Nevertheless, Finbarr prepared for the hearing. Until, that is, he got another letter from ICTU Assistant General Secretary Tom Wall on 25 November, 1998. It read:

'I understand from SIPTU that you are no longer a member of that union. If this is the case the appeals procedures of Congress are no longer open to you.'

"And that was it. SIPTU had confirmed to ICTU that Finbarr was no longer one of its members, and the appeal could not therefore be heard. We were henceforth to be treated, rightly, as other than members of SIPTU. At least, until it suited SIPTU. In 2001, we joined the ATGWU and it then suited SIPTU General Secretary John McDonnell to complain to ICTU—on 6 March 2001, two and a half years later—that we were actually SIPTU members in arrears. ICTU conveniently ignored its 1998 letter and agreed with SIPTU" (p75/76).

In January, 1996, CIE workers organised a state-wide protest, despite Union Head Office opposition. In Dublin, 5,000 CIE workers marched in protest against yet another CIE viability plan. "It was so successful that, in order to save face with its members, one union tried to claim credit for organising it behind the scenes" (p33). Ogle spoke at Government Buildings to the assembled workers. "It was the first major public address I had ever made and I didn't hold back" (p33). He made an impact, that's for sure:

"While we sat in Conway's eating our lunch, a figure in a trench coat stood above me. I raised my eyes to see Peter Bunting looking down on me. 'Are you Brendan Ogle?' he asked. When I replied that I was, he said that I was never to attack him publicly again and that he took exception to being compared to Bill Attley. I asked was he finished and he said he was. I said I could not give him the commitment he was seeking and I suggested that he leave and allow me to finish my lunch" (p33).

### The Price Of Battle

The ILDA Lock-out had serious casualties too, both physically and politically. With perhaps more yet to come on the political front. The Dublin Trade Union leader, Michael O'Reilly, was suspended from his post as Irish Regional Secretary of the ATGWU.

"He was sacked from his position as general secretary in 2001—on charges of 'gross misconduct'—after he brought

ILDA train drivers into the union" (Business & Finance, 4.12.2003).

"When O'Reilly was suspended, it was alleged that it was Irish Rail correspondence that was the straw that broke the camels back", says Irish Rails Human Resources Manager, John Keenan" (ibid.).

And Keenan should know!

Michael O'Reilly, along with his colleague Eugene McGlone "were offered their jobs back with their old salaries and conditions, all back pay they had lost to be repaid, and all charges in respect of ILDA were summarily dismissed. To save face, their old jobs would be advertised and they couldn't apply for new positions for twelve months" (Ogle, p324).

Michael O'Reilly is now the ATGWU "servicing officer" for the ATGWU 3/57 branch. The branch secretary is Brendan Ogle.

### Christy Holbrook

On the physical side, Christy Holbrook, a Corkman and President of ILDA left Dublin on Tuesday morning, 22nd August 2000, after a five-hour executive meeting. Before he arrived home in Cork, he suffered a heart attack. "Christy now recalls that night vividly—the debate; the long drive; the worry. As he reached his home in Douglas, a Cork suburb, it was bright. He felt dizzy and breathless, 'tingly'. And then he was in hospital. Christy Holbrook would never drive another train or attend another meeting of the ILDA executive. Our President, Chairman, was gone" (p266).

Part Two of this review will appear in the September issue

## NEW NATIONAL WAGE AGREEMENT

ON July 18, 2004, the ICTU, Employers and the Government sealed a deal under which 520,000 workers will get pay rises of 5.53% over the next 18 months.

Union leaders welcomed the deal, particularly the slightly better terms for those earning less than 351 Euros a week, who will get a 4% annual pay rise.

The best part of the deal for public servants is the expectation that they will get a second round of benchmarking, which could provide more top-up pay rises within three years.

Both employers and unions had hoped to secure pledges on reductions in income tax through a widening of tax bands in next December's Budget. The failure to adjust the bands over the past two years has been criticised as a "stealth tax" in addition to the number of rising public service and utility charges.

But the two sides were unable to secure pledges from the Government.

### KEY POINTS:

**Annual Increase: 3.6% rise in wages and salaries. 1.5% for first six months; 1.5% for second six months; 2.5% for third six months. Combined increase of 5.53% over 18 months.**

**Low Paid: Flat Rate increase—No lump sum payment provided. % for Lower paid—4% annual rise for those earning below 351 Euros a week—maximum of an extra 14 Euros.**

**Minimum Wage: Labour Court to decide on increases above the current 7 Euros an hour.**

**Benchmarking: New round for 230,000 public servants to report by 2007.**

**Redundancy Pay: Statutory ceiling to rise above current 507 Euros in weekly earnings to 600 Euros.**

**Local Bargaining: No provision except over pension and sick schemes.**

**Pay Pause: Six month delay in paying public servants to June, 2005.**

**Inability to pay: Companies to continue with LRC assessors' financial reports.**

**Industrial Peace: Binding decisions by the Labour Court to continue.**

**Inflation top-up: No provision if inflation goes higher than projected 3.1%.**

## ILDA continued

Workers' Union,(CWU), Mr. Con Scanlon, announced he would step down from the post within three months.

"He insisted, however, that the decision had nothing to do with recent controversy over his remuneration as a board member of Eircom, of which he is deputy chairman... He accepted, however, that his dual role would have been an issue for some union members if he had decided to stay on" (Irish Times, 29.4.2004).

As Eircom's Deputy Chairman, Con Scanlon will receive remuneration and shares worth a total of 800,000 Euros over the two-and-a-half years that Sir Tony O'Reilly's Valentia owned Eircom. Mr. Scanlon's case is somewhat different to that of the other executives, in that as the head of the Communications Workers' Union and Eircom Employee Share Ownership Trust, he sat on the Board of the telecommunications group as a non-executive Deputy Chairman.

"He had been on secondment to the CWU from Eircom where he worked since the 1970s. He formally left Eircom only last year, and was entitled to pension arrangements. He is receiving a One Million Euros top-up on his Eircom pension, payable as 70,000 Euros per year over 10 years, from the age of 50. He will then receive his normal Eircom pension. He also received a total of 196,000 Euros remuneration during the two-and-a-half years, and a lump sum gratuity related to retirement from Eircom of 210,000 Euros. He will receive 600,000 Euros worth of Eircom shares" (Irish Independent, 5.3.2004).

On the Sunday that the British *Sunday Times* profiled Con Scanlon as the Union Hero Who Made Capitalism Work For Him (14.3.2004), a much more ominous report appeared in the *Sunday Tribune*.

"ICTU general secretary, David Begg had admitted that the privatisation of Eircom has turned out to be 'a major mistake and contrary to the public interest', despite having been one of the main negotiators of the employees' stake in the company.

"'Most people think in terms of the loss suffered by investors', said Begg, 'but actually the worst part of it was to end up turning a public monopoly into a private monopoly.' The damage done to Ireland's competitiveness by the failure to develop broadband was a clear outcome, he said, while a more immediate manifestation in the eyes of the ordinary customer was the recent 25% hike in line rental charges"

"Begg, who was leader of the CWU up until 1997—when he left to head up the charity CONCERN—said that his original aim in seeking a strategic 14.9% stake in the company was to prevent it falling into private hands, not facilitate it" (ibid).

The CWU/Eircom episode is about as powerful a 'political vane' as to where the Trade Union movement stands today!

No one has explained amidst all the allelujahs and panegyrics of the wonders of Social Partnership how the men from ILDA were locked out for 10 weeks in 2000 and the workers at the Cork plant of ADM in Ringaskiddy, even longer—134 days, in 2003—some of whom never returned to their workplace.

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"Never forget, dear boy, that every bureaucracy will do as much harm as it can, and as much good as it must"

CLAUD COCKBURN

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The catalyst that ultimately launched ILDA, was the "*blue book' proposal document*", also known as the "*1994 Productivity*" which sought to eliminate the historical condition of service called mileage,—amongst other changes.

It wasn't that the locomotive drivers were unwilling to change work practices : they were,. It was the manner in which CIE and the industrial relations establishment attempted to dragoon and bulldoze and ram the '94 Agreement down the throats of the train drivers which brought the revolt.

Arrogance, betrayal, deceit, condescension litter the pages of this book as 'superior' minds attempt to brush aside a bunch of Trade Union 'gnats' acting above their station.

The nub of the men's grievance in the 1994 dispute was that locomotive drivers alone should vote on drivers' issues.

At first, they did—with both SIPTU and NBRU drivers voting by 98% to reject the 'blue book' changes. Despite this, Iarnrod Eireann advised the unions that the 'blue book' would be implemented without union accord.

Next stop: the Labour Court—but no joy there, in the graveyard of industrial disputes, as a man would say.

"I am sure we weren't the first group of workers to enter the Labour Court having rejected proposals and to emerge

with even worse ones..." (p15).

In the end, both SIPTU and the NBRU acceded to the company's demands on the '94 Agreement, despite the near unanimous opposition of the train drivers. This was despite a SIPTU notice to drivers in 1994, quoted by Ogle:

"'The decision of any other grade or group of grades will not affect Locomotive Drivers. Drivers only will decide on drivers' issues, as is the case in other grades also.' To emphasise the point, these words were printed in bold type and even underlined" (p15).

### The Attley Saga

However, like Joe Hill, the train drivers were not for disappearing; they attempted to exercise their rights through the appeals procedure of SIPTU:

"Finbarr Masterson eventually travelled to meet the General Secretary on 3 June, 1997, three years after the disputed events had taken place. By any standards, it was a remarkable timescale, of tribunal proportions. Having travelled the 170 miles from Westport to hear what the General Secretary of Ireland's largest union had to say on these three-year-old complaints, Finbarr sat in reception as Bill Attley called his secretary from home to advise that he was otherwise disposed and wouldn't be coming into the office that day. Not one to give up at this stage, Finbarr persisted. On 18 June, 1997, he actually had an audience with the General Secretary. Mr. Attley was in possession of all the correspondence from Brendan Hayes. He had the witness statements from various other members—many of whom were not drivers—alleging irregularities. However, Bill Attley, even after all this time, had no answers. He believed that none of the circumstances outlined by Finbarr should be a cause for concern. The union, he affirmed, had honoured its commitments to its members in every respect. As the meeting ended, Mr. Attley suggested that Finbarr was the difficulty and that he would not accept any explanation. Finbarr's contention that he had received no explanations after over three years of questions was simply ignored. SIPTU's internal complaints procedure had been completed. Or had it?" (p29).

A similar fate awaited the locomotive brethren when they made a formal complaint to the ICTU appeals board:

"...something that we had been waiting for over four years to happen did happen. ICTU wrote to Finbarr giving him a date for the hearing of the complaint against SIPTU after Finbarr and other

continued on page 21

## ILDA continued

have nothing more left to change! We have given it all away!

### “Put Your Money Where Your Mouth Is”

The following episode brilliantly sums up the courage and spirit of the men who made up ILDA, the moment when it was “shape up or ship out” time—they never flinched!

“Once the High Court case became inevitable, it was necessary to broach the issue of money. Initial estimates from legal advisors were that the case might take two days, and that a loss might see us sustain costs, all in, of £90,000. Obviously, this was a considerable sum for a new organisation, and there was simply no reserve to meet it. We were asked to provide £30,000 up front to get the ball moving... a small number of us had had discussion about how we would raise the required £30,000. We anticipated one particular member having acute problems raising such money, and the intention was to seek lump-sum payments of £3,000 from the other ten... When the discussion in Tullamore opened, all present were asked for suggestions. The first man to speak was the man who we had anticipated would be in difficulty. He said that there were eleven of us and that eleven £3,000s was £33,000. He had already taken out a five-year loan and we would have his £3,000 by the following Tuesday. That was it. No more discussion... My own came from a loan taken out over three years” (p99).

Union officialdom comes out of this book very badly—it was always the course of least resistance.

The reader must examine *Off The Rails* in the light of the current industrial and political climate which besets the trade union movement!

### Privatise Or Be Damned!

We have a coalition Government, whose junior partner of six TDs, acting as the political wing of IBEC [the employers’ organisation], trenchantly pursuing an active policy of economic rationalism, aided and abetted by at least four PD fellow travellers on the Fianna Fail side in the Cabinet, led by a Taoiseach whose sole *raison d’être* is retaining power, at any price!

But of equal influence is the national partnership accord, which after 17 years is exposing all the limitations of a design, based predominately on wage agreements

appropriate to a period of boom—but which is miserably bereft in less buoyant times.

In plain English—the acceptance by the Trade Union movement of wage control but in all other economic respects, conceding free and unhindered movement of prices, which has left its membership and the working-class at the mercy of the free market.

*Deja Vu* would surely have been Brendan Ogle’s reaction to the events of the St. Patrick’s week (17.3.2004), when Jack O’Connor, President of SIPTU, along with senior officials “called off the airports stoppage without consulting the strike leaders. The decision only became known when the union’s legal council, Richard Kean, S.C., stood up in the High Court to say the strike was off... O’Connor, meanwhile, had moved on to persuading the union’s CIE strike committee to call off its public transport strike. Having failed in this endeavour, he and the union’s other general officers invoked a little-used rule to impose a cancellation of the action” (Irish Times, 20.3.2004).

Dublin Bus Strike Committee Chairman, Bill McCamley reacted by stating that the SIPTU/NBRU leadership “*had walked away from their members*” (RTE, 18.3.2004).

It had taken O’Connor and senior officials three days to persuade Aer Rianta activists to call off their previous threatened stoppage in January, 2004.

“Members are angry that the strike was cancelled just before Ryanair’s Michael O’Leary attempted to injunct SIPTU in the High Court. They believe it gave the impression that SIPTU was running scared” (Sunday Business Post, 21.3.2004).

In November, 2003, Seamus Brennan, Transport Minister announced “*that one quarter of bus services/routes in Dublin would be operated by private firms by January, 2004*” (Irish Independent, 18.3.2004).

This would have meant axing 600 Dublin Bus drivers’ jobs and opening the market to Ryanair-style low cost and a low wage type operation.

Brennan is a ‘dodo’, he was one of Jack Lynch’s whizz kids. He’s a failed PD-er. He was *gauleiter* of the events surrounding the Millennium—first of all, he got the date wrong, bowing to commercial interests, he held it a year early! He caused panic to such an extent on 31st December 1999 that most

publicans were forced to close their pubs on the night. Then he attempted to send a candle to every home, half the space in the postal sector is still taken up by undelivered candles, hence, the name ‘*Candles*’ Brennan.

Even his own have twigged on to ‘Candles’—the Economic Editor of *The Irish Times*, Cliff Taylor has openly stated that the Government doesn’t know where it is at, or, where it is going on CIE and Aer Rianta.

“A sensible approach—once the Government decided that splitting Aer Rianta up was an option—would surely have been to have the pros and cons studied in detail. This would have produced a blueprint for discussion with the unions.

“If the time came for the Government to have a row on the issue and push something through, at least it would have a clear idea where it was going” (19.3.2004).

To compound the difficulty for SIPTU : the NBRU, a sister transport union, claimed the strike was totally unjustified, that they were making progress with the Transport Minister, Brennan.

The National Bus & Rail Union (NBRU) has more than 3,500 rail and bus drivers and is the largest union in Dublin Bus. Like ILDA, the NBRU was a breakaway from SIPTU’s old predecessor, the ITGWU. The National Busmen’s Union, its founding title, received its negotiating licence in 1964 with a membership of 2,000. This followed the April 2, 1963 Five-Week National Strike over the one-man bus operations.

It is important to note that the NBRU is not affiliated to the Irish Congress of Trade Unions

As we go to press, Bus and Rail union leaders abandoned plans for seven days of escalating strikes after securing what they hailed a major climbdown by Transport Minister, Seamus Brennan, on his aims to privatise one quarter of Dublin bus services.

NBRU leader Liam Tobin said: “*Any proposals for franchising or privatising Dublin Bus services are now gone and there will be no downsizing of Dublin Bus which will be allowed expand with the growing transport market*” (Irish Independent, 14.7.2004).

### Trade Union Millionaires!

On 28th April 2004, the General Secretary of the Communications

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# Off The Rails

## The Story Of ILDA by Brendan Ogle—

Currach Press, 2003  
(18.99 Euros).

352 pp, Index.

BRENDAN OGLE would make no claim to have produced a definitive map on the future of trade unions, but anyone with a mind and commitment to pursue such an aim cannot ignore his outline of the problems which beset the movement. He has made a singular contribution in that regard.

It is rare indeed when the toiler puts pen to paper for publication, perhaps after retirement, and even more rare when an activist has the courage to take on such a task during his working life. Brendan Ogle, is 35 years of age and still driving his train. He has a wife and family and is now honorary secretary of the Amalgamated Transport & General Workers branch, 3/57 (ATGWU).

Another aspect of this story of struggle : it did not begin in the great metropolis, it was a battle by men from towns like Athlone and Westport. In many ways, the tenacity in their struggle reflected a rural common sense and sheer determination!

He and his comrades went through more in 10 weeks, than thousands of active trade unionists go through in a lifetime!

It should be noted also, that ILDA (Irish Locomotive Drivers' Association) was a homogeneous group of 118 people of like status in a highly complex service employing 5,000 people of endless classifications and status, all with a single employer. The biggest problem for any Trade Union, and the bigger the union, the greater the problem is when grades and classifications multiply and employer groups go to any ends to ensure that such divisions are perpetually exploited—playing one set of workers against another.

ILDA was formally launched on the 28th September, 1998. It received Registration from the Registrar of Friendly

Societies. Before a trade union can apply for a negotiating licence or claim 'excepted body' status, it must first of all become a registered Trade Union.

The membership of 118 made up over 40 per cent of Iarnrod Eireann's 265 train drivers. Iarnrod Eireann's total staff is approximately 5,000. In Britain, the total number of locomotive drivers is 1,700.

His point about the size of the National Bus & Rail Union (NBRU)—fewer than 3,000 members—puts into perspective his own 130 members. There's a further parallel in that NBRU, like ILDA, was born out of despair and frustration in the forerunner of SIPTU, the old Irish Transport & General Workers Union (ITGWU).

"Those working men faced an alliance that included three government departments, the industrial relations organs of the state, a 'commercial' semi-state company, Ireland's biggest union and, in fact, the entire Irish Congress of Trade Unions, an at-times hysterical media, and High Court and Supreme Court actions. However, a small bunch of train drivers, who always believed

that they had right on their side and that their cause was just, stood together in the face of everything that could possibly have been thrown at them" (p10).

In the Summer of 2000, the company locked out ILDA members for 10 weeks, when it refused to engage the Union in its decision to implement new work practices.

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"The book is written with honesty and passion... It will provide valuable raw material for those who study and research in industrial relations and is in itself an important contribution to the history of railways, industrial relations and trade unionism... There are important lessons here both for the crasser exponents of unbridled competition and trade union leaders who may have strayed far from the common decencies of working people. Both sides of the industrial divide and scholars and students in the field will benefit from reading this book"

(Michael Barry, Dean and Senior

Lecturer, Industrial Relations/

Sociology, National College of Ireland.)

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"Ogle has an old-style view of employers. He believes it is their job to get the most out of their employees for as little as possible. Unions exist to ensure the best pay and terms and conditions for their members for as little sacrifice as possible" (Sunday Tribune, 2.11.2003).

"He just keeps cranking up the ratchets, looking for more", said one official. "He doesn't seem to understand that, as a negotiator, you have to agree to change a little" (Sunday Times, London, 13.5.2001).

The problem with a lot of Trade Unions is that they have changed so much—we

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